



DRESS
AS A FINE ART.

WITH SUGGESTIONS ON CHILDREN'S DRESS.

Mrs. Merrifield
BY MRS. MERRIFIELD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON

Head Dress.

Prof. Fairholt
BY PROF. FAIRHOLT.

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P R E F A C E .

THE fact that we derive our styles of dress from the same source as the English, and that the work of Mrs. Merrifield has been circulated among the forty thousand subscribers of the "London Art Journal," might perhaps be deemed sufficient apology for offering it in its present form to the American public. It has received the unqualified approbation of the best publications in this country;—entire chapters having been copied into the periodicals of the day; this added to the above, and also to the high standing of the author, has induced the publishers to offer it to the great reading public of this country.

The chapter on Head-dresses, which commences the book, is of much interest in itself, and affords an explanation of many of the descriptions in the body of the work.

The closing chapter, on Children's Dress, by Mrs. Mer-

rifield, will be deemed of more value by most persons than the cost of the entire work.

A few verbal alterations only have been made in the original;—the good sense of every reader will enable him to understand the local allusions, and where they belong to England alone, to make the application.

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CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF HEAD-DRESSES.



IG. 1 is a front view of a head-dress of Lady Arderne, (who died about the middle of the fifteenth century.) The caul of the head-dress is richly embroidered, the veil above being supported by wires, in the shape of a heart, with double lappets behind the head, which are sometimes transparent, as if made of gauze.

Such gauze veils, or rather coverings for the head-dress, are frequently seen in the miniatures of MSS. Figs. 2, 3, are here selected from the royal MS. In Fig. 3, the steeple head-dress of the lady is entirely covered by a thin veil of gauze, which hangs from its summit, and projects over her face. Fig. 2 has a sort of hat, widening from its base, and made of cloth of gold, richly set with stones. Such jew-
1 . 1

elled head-dresses are represented on the heads of noble ladies, and are frequently ornamented in the most beautiful manner, with stones of various tints.

The slab to the memory of John Rolestone, Esq., sometime Lord of Swarston, and Sicili, his wife, in Swarkstone Church, Derbyshire, who died in 1482, gives the head-dress of the said Sicili as represented in Fig. 6. It is a simple cap, radiating in gores over the head, having a knob in its centre and a close falling veil of cloth affixed round the back. It seems to have been constructed as much for comfort as for show: the same remark may be applied to Fig. 4, which certainly cannot be recommended for its beauty, being a stunted cone, with a back veil closely fitting about the neck, and very sparingly ornamented; it was worn by Mary, wife of John Rolestone, who died in 1485. These may both have been plain country ladies, far removed from London, and little troubled with its fashionable freaks. Fig. 5 represents the fashionable head-dress of the last days of the house of York.

It has been termed the heart-shaped head-dress, from the appearance it presents when viewed in front, which resembles that of a heart, and sometimes a crescent. It is made of black silk or velvet, ornamented with gold studs, and having a jewel over the forehead. It has a long band or lappet, such as the gentlemen then wore affixed to their hats. Figs. 7 and 8 represent head-dresses worn in the time of Henry VIII. These are a sort of cap, which seem to combine coverchief and hood. Fig. 7 was at this time the extreme of fashion. It is edged with lace, and ornamented with jewelry, and has altogether a look of utter unmeaningness and confusion of form. Fig. 8 has a hood easier of comprehension, but no whit better in point of elegance than her predecessors; it fits the head closely, having pendent jewels round the bottom and crossing the brow. Figs. 9 and 11 are hats of a very simple style, such as were worn during the reign of George II., when an affected simplicity, or milk-maiden look, was coveted by the ladies, both high and low. The hood worn by Fig. 10 was a complete envelope for the head, and was

used in riding, or travelling, as well as in walking in the parks. These were called Nithsdales, because Lady Nithsdale covered her husband's face with one of them, after dressing him in her clothes, and thus disguised he escaped from the Tower. Fig. 12 represents a hat worn during the reign of William III. by a damsel who was crying, "Fair cherries, at sixpence a pound!" It is of straw, with a ribbon tied around it in a simple and tasteful manner; the hat is altogether a light and graceful affair, and its want of obtrusiveness is perhaps its chief recommendation. Figs. 13 and 14 are hats such as were worn by citizens and their wives during the reigns of James and Charles I. Figs. 15, 16, 17, were such head-dresses as were in vogue in 1798. Fig. 15 was of a deep orange color, with bands of dark chocolate brown; a bunch of scarlet tufts came over the forehead, and it was held on the head by a kerchief of white muslin tied beneath the chin. Fig. 16 is a straw bonnet, the crown decorated with red perpendicular stripes, the front over the face plain, and a row of laurel leaves surrounds the head; a laven-

der-colored tie secures it under the chin. Bonnets somewhat similar to those now worn were fashionable two years previous to this; yet a small, low-crowned hat, like the one in Fig. 17, was as much patronized as any head-dress had ever been.

Cocked hats, such as is represented in Fig. 18, were worn by the gentlemen in the last part of the year 1700. Fig. 19 represents one of the head-dresses worn during the reign of Henry VI. It is a combination of coverchief and turban. Fig. 20 is a combination of the head-dress of Fig. 7 with the lappeted hood of Fig. 8. In 1786, a very large-brimmed hat became fashionable with the ladies, and continued in vogue for the next two years; an idea of the back view of it is given in Fig. 21, and a front view in Fig. 22. It was decorated with triple feathers, and a broad band of ribbon was tied in a bow behind, and allowed to stream down the back. The elegance of turn which the brim of such a hat afforded was completely overdone by the enormity of its proportion; and the shelter it gave the face can now be considered as the only recom-

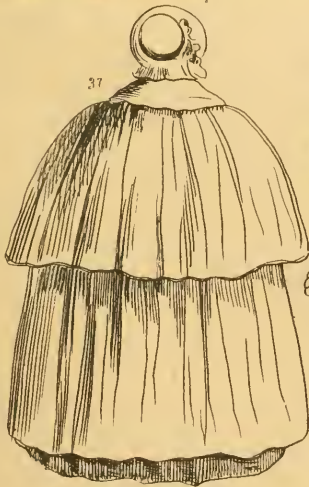
mendation of this fashion. The hat worn by Fig. 23 was the style of 1785. Feathers were then much in favor, and a poet of the time writes of the ladies, —

“No longer they hunt after ribbons and lace;
Undertakers have got in the milliner's place;
With hands sacrilegious they've plundered the dead,
And transferred the gay plumes from the hearse to the head.”

Fig. 24 represents the head-dress worn in 1782. At no period in the history of the world was any thing more absurd in head-dress than the one here depicted. The body of this erection was formed of tow, over which the hair was turned, and false hair added in great curls; bobs and ties, powdered to profusion, then hung all over with vulgarly large rows of pearls, or glass beads, fit only to decorate a chandelier; flowers as obtrusive were stuck about this heap of finery, which was surmounted by broad silken bands and great ostrich feathers, until the head-dress of a lady added three feet to her stature, and “the male sex,” to use the words of the “Spectator,” “became suddenly dwarfed beside her.”

To effect this, much time and trouble were wasted, and great personal annoyance was suffered. Heads, when properly dressed, "kept for three weeks," as the barbers quaintly phrased it; that they would not really "keep" longer, may be seen by the many receipts they gave for the destruction of insects, which bred in the flour and pomatum so liberally bestowed upon them. Fig. 25 is another fashionable outdoor head-dress. Fig. 26 represents one of the hats invented to cover the head when full dressed. It is as extravagant as the head-dresses. It is a large but light compound of gauze, wire, ribbons, and flowers, sloping over the forehead, and sheltering the head entirely by its immensity. Fig. 27 shows how immensely globular the head of a lady had become; it swells all around like a huge pumpkin, and curls of a corresponding size aid in the caricature which now passed as fashionable taste. As if this were not load enough for the fair shoulders of the softer sex, it is swathed with a huge veil or scarf, giving the wearer an exceedingly top-heavy look. In 1790, the ladies appeared in hats similar

to those worn by the gentlemen in 1792; these are represented in Figs. 28 and 30. They were gayly decorated with gold strings, and tassels, crossed and recrossed over the crown. The brims were broad, raised at the sides, and pointed over the face in a manner not inelegant. Fig. 29 has the tall, ugly bonnet, copied from the French peasantry; a long gauze border is attached to the edges, which hangs like a veil around the face, and partially conceals it. A hat of a very piquant character was adopted by the ladies in 1791, of which a specimen is given in Fig. 31. It is decorated with bows, and a large feather nods not ungracefully over the crown from behind. A person with good face and figure must have looked becomingly beneath it. Fig. 32 is an example of the bad taste which still peeped forth. It is one of the most fashionable head-dresses worn in 1789, and is the back view of a lady's head, surmounted by a very small cap or hat, puffed round with ribbon; the hair is arranged in a long, straight bunch down the neck, where it is tied by a ribbon, and flows in curls beneath; long curls repose one on



each shoulder, while the hair at the sides of the head is frizzed out on each side in a most fantastic form. The hat of Fig. 33, shaped like a chimney pot, and decorated with small tufts of ribbon, and larger bows, which fitted on a lady's head like the cover on a canister, was viewed with "marvellous favor" by many a fair eye, in the year 1789. It was sometimes bordered with lace, as in Fig. 29, thus hiding the entire head, and considerably enhancing its ugliness.

CHAPTER II.

DRESS, AS A FINE ART.



IN a state so highly civilized as that in which we live, the art of dress has become extremely complicated. That it is an art to set off our persons to the greatest advantage must be generally admitted, and we think it is one which, under certain conditions, may be studied by the most scrupulous. An art implies skill and dexterity in setting off or employing the gifts of nature to the greatest advantage, and we are surely not wrong in laying it down as a general principle, that every one may endeavor to set off or improve his or her personal appearance, provided that, in doing so, the party is guilty of no deception. As this proposition may be liable to some misconstruction, we will endeavor to explain our meaning.

In the first place, the principle is acted upon by all who study cleanliness and neatness, which are universally considered as positive duties, that are not only conducive to our own comfort, but that society has a right to expect from us. Again: the rules of society require that to a certain extent we should adopt those forms of dress which are in common use, but our own judgment should be exercised in adapting these forms to our individual proportions, complexions, ages, and stations in society. In accomplishing this object, the most perfect honesty and sincerity of purpose may be observed. No deception is to be practised, no artifice employed, beyond that which is exercised by the painter, who arranges his subjects in the most pleasing forms, and who selects colors which harmonize with each other; and by the manufacturer, who studies pleasing combinations of lines and colors. We exercise taste in the decoration and arrangement of our apartments and in our furniture, and we are equally at liberty to do so with regard to our dress; but we know that taste is not an

instinctive perception of the beautiful and agreeable, but is founded upon the observance of certain laws of nature. When we conform to these laws, the result is pleasing and satisfactory; when we offend against them, the contrary effect takes place. Our persons change with our years; the child passes into youth, the youth into maturity, maturity changes into old age. Every period of life has its peculiar external characteristics, its pleasures, its pains, and its pursuits. The art of dress consists in properly adapting our clothing to these changes.

We violate the laws of nature when we seek to repair the ravages of time on our complexions by paint, when we substitute false hair for that which age has thinned or blanched, or conceal the change by dyeing our own gray hair; when we pad our dress to conceal that one shoulder is larger than the other. To do either is not only bad taste, but it is a positive breach of sincerity. It is bad taste, because the means we have resorted to are contrary to the laws of nature. The application of paint to the skin produces an effect so different from the bloom

of youth, that it can only deceive an unpractised eye. It is the same with the hair: there is such a want of harmony between false hair and the face which it surrounds, especially when that face bears the marks of age, and the color of the hair denotes youth, that the effect is unpleasing in the extreme. Deception of this kind, therefore, does not answer the end which it had in view; it deceives nobody but the unfortunate perpetrator of the would-be deceit. It is about as senseless a proceeding as that of the goose in the story, who, when pursued by the fox, thrust her head into a hedge, and thought that, because she could no longer see the fox, the fox could not see her. But in a moral point of view it is worse than silly; it is adopted with a view to deceive; it is *acting a lie* to all intents and purposes, and it ought to be held in the same kind of detestation as falsehood with the tongue. Zimmerman has an aphorism which is applicable to this case — “Those who conceal their age do not conceal their folly.”

The weak and vain, who hope to conceal their age

by paint and false hair, are, however, morally less culpable than another class of dissemblers, inasmuch as the deception practised by the first is so palpable that it really deceives no one. With regard to the other class of dissemblers, we feel some difficulty in approaching a subject of so much delicacy. Yet, as we have stated that we are at liberty to improve our natural appearance by well-adapted dress, we think it our duty to speak out, lest we should be considered as in any way countenancing deception. We allude to those physical defects induced by disease, which are frequently united to great beauty of countenance, and which are sometimes so carefully concealed by the dress, that they are only discovered after marriage.

Having thus, we hope, established the innocence of our motives, we shall proceed to mention the legitimate means by which the personal appearance may be improved by the study of the art of dress.

Fashion in dress is usually dictated by caprice or accident, or by the desire of novelty. It is never, we believe, based upon the study of the figure.

It is somewhat singular that while every lady thinks herself at liberty to wear any textile fabric or any color she pleases, she considers herself bound to adopt the form and style of dress which the fashion of the day has rendered popular. The despotism of fashion is limited to *form*, but *color* is free. We have shown, in another essay, (see closing chapter,) what licentiousness this freedom in the adoption and mixture of colors too frequently induces. We have also shown that the colors worn by ladies should be those which contrast or harmonize best with their individual complexions, and we have endeavored to make the selection of suitable colors less difficult by means of a few general rules founded upon the laws of harmony and contrast of colors. In the present essay, we propose to offer some general observations on form in dress. The subject is, however, both difficult and complicated, and as it is easier to condemn than to improve or perfect, we shall more frequently indicate what fashions should not be adopted, than recommend others to the patronage of our readers.

The immediate objects of dress are twofold — namely, decency and warmth; but so many minor considerations are suffered to influence us in choosing our habiliments, that these primary objects are too frequently kept out of sight. Dress should be not only adapted to the climate, it should also be light in weight, should yield to the movements of the body, and should be easily put on or removed. It should also be adapted to the station in society, and to the age, of the individual. These are the essential conditions; yet in practice how frequently are they overlooked; in fact, how seldom are they observed! Next in importance are general elegance of form, harmony in the arrangement and selection of the colors, and special adaptation in form and color to the person of the individual. To these objects we purpose directing the attention of the reader.

It is impossible, within the limits we have prescribed ourselves, to enter into the subject of dress minutely; we can only deal with it generally, and lay down certain broad principles for our guidance.

If these are observed, there is still a wide margin left for fancy and fashion. These may find scope in trimmings and embroidery ; the application of which, however, must also be regulated by good taste and knowledge. The physical variety in the human race is infinite ; so are the gradations and combinations of color ; yet we expect a few forms of dress to suit every age and complexion ! Instead of the beautiful, the graceful, and the becoming, what are the attractions offered by the dress makers ? What are the terms used to invite the notice of customers ? Novelty and distinction. The shops are “Magasins de Nouveautés,” the goods are “distingués,” “recherchés,” “nouveaux,” “the last fashion.” The new fashions are exhibited on the elegant person of one of the dress maker’s assistants, who is selected for this purpose, and are adopted by the purchaser without reflecting how much of the attraction of the dress is to be ascribed to the fine figure of the wearer, how much to the beauty of the dress, or whether it will look equally well on herself. So the fashion is set, and then it is followed by others, until at last it

becomes singular not to adopt some modification of it, although the extreme may be avoided. The best dressers are generally those who follow the fashions at a great distance.

Fashion is the only tyrant against whom modern civilization has not carried on a crusade, and its power is still as unlimited and despotic as it ever was. From its dictates there is no appeal; health and decency are alike offered up at the shrine of this Moloch. At its command its votaries melt under fur boas in the dog days, and freeze with bare necks and arms, in lace dresses and satin shoes, in January. Then, such is its caprice, that no sooner does a fashion become general, than, let its merits or beauties be ever so great, it is changed for one which perhaps has nothing but its novelty to recommend it. Like the bed of Procrustes, fashions are compelled to suit every one. The same fashion is adopted by the tall and the short, the stout and the slender, the old and the young, with what effect we have daily opportunities of observing.

Yet, with all its vagaries, fashion is extremely

aristocratic in its tendencies. Every change emanates from the highest circles, who reject it when it has descended to the vulgar. No new form of dress was ever successful which did not originate among the aristocracy. From the ladies of the court, the fashions descend through all the ranks of society, until they at last die a natural death among the cast-off clothes of the housemaid.

Fig. 35.

Had the Bloomer costume, which has obtained so much notoriety, been introduced by a tall and graceful scion of the aristocracy, either of rank or talent, instead of being at first adopted by the middle ranks, it might have met with better success. We have seen that Jenny Lind could introduce a new fashion of wearing the hair, and a new form of hat or bonnet, and Mme. Sontag a cap which bears her name. But it was against all precedent to admit and follow a fashion, let its merits be ever so great, that emanated from the stronghold of democracy. We are content to adopt the greatest absurdities in dress when they are brought from Paris, or recom-

mended by a French name; but American fashions have no chance of success in aristocratic England. It is beginning at the wrong end.

The eccentricities of fashion are so great that they would appear incredible if we had not ocular evidence of their prevalence in the portraits which still exist. At one period we read of horned head-dresses, which were so large and high, that it is said the doors of the palace at Vincennes were obliged to be altered to admit Isabel of Bavaria (queen of Charles VI. of France) and the ladies of her suite. In the reign of Edward IV., the ladies' caps were three quarters of an ell in height, and were covered by pieces of lawn hanging down to the ground, or stretched over a frame till they resembled the wings of a butterfly.* At another time the ladies' heads were covered with gold nets, like those worn at the present day. Then, again, the hair, stiffened with powder and pomatum, and sur-

* Mr. Planché has shown, in his "History of British Costume," that these head-dresses are the prototypes of those still worn by the women of Normandy.

mounted by flowers, feathers, and ribbons, was raised on the top of the head like a tower. Such head-dresses were emphatically called "*têtes*." (See chapter on Head-Dress.) Fig. 36. But to go back no farther than the beginning of the present century, where Mr. Fairholt's interesting work on British Costume terminates, what changes have we to record! The first fashion we remember was that of scanty clothing, when slender figures were so much admired, that many, to whom nature had denied this qualification, left off the under garments necessary for warmth, and fell victims to the colds and consumptions induced by their adoption of this senseless practice. To these succeeded waists so short that the girdles were placed almost under the arms, and as the dresses were worn at that time indecently low in the neck, the body of the dress was almost a myth. Fig. 39.

About the same time, the sleeves were so short, and the skirts so curtailed in length, that there was reason to fear that the whole of the drapery might also become a myth. A partial reaction then took

place, and the skirts were lengthened without increasing the width of the dresses, the consequence of which was felt in the country, if not in the towns. Then woe to those who had to cross a ditch or a stile! One of two things was inevitable; either the unfortunate lady was thrown to the ground, — and in this case it was no easy matter to rise again, — or her dress was split up. The result depended entirely upon the strength of the materials of which the dress was composed. The next variation, the *gigot* sleeves, namely, were a positive deformity, inasmuch as they gave an unnatural width to the shoulders — a defect which was further increased by the large collars which fell over them, thus violating one of the first principles of beauty in the female form, which demands that this part of the body should be narrow; breadth of shoulder being one of the distinguishing characteristics of the stronger sex. We remember to have seen an engraving from a portrait, by Lawrence, of the late Lady Blessington, in which the breadth of the shoulders appeared to be at least three quarters of a yard. When a

person of low stature, wearing sleeves of this description, was covered with one of the long cloaks, which were made wide at the shoulders to admit the sleeves, and to which was appended a deep and very full cape, the effect was ridiculous, and the outline of the whole mass resembled that of a haystack with a head on the top. Fig. 37. One absurdity generally leads to another; to balance the wide shoulders, the bonnets and caps were made of enormous dimensions, and were decorated with a profusion of ribbons and flowers. So absurd was the whole combination, that, when we meet with a portrait of this period, we can only look on it in the light of a caricature, and wonder that such should ever have been so universal as to be adopted at last by all who wished to avoid singularity. The transition from the broad shoulders and gigot sleeves to the tight sleeves and graceful black scarf was quite refreshing to a tasteful eye. These were a few of the freaks of fashion during the last half century. Had they been quite harmless, we might have considered them as merely ridiculous; but some of them

were positively indecent, and others detrimental to health. We grieve especially for the former charge : it is an anomaly for which, considering the modest habits and education of our countrywomen, we find it difficult to account.

It is singular that the practice of wearing dresses cut low round the bust should be limited to what is called full dress, and to the higher, and, except in this instance, the more refined classes. Is it to display a beautiful neck and shoulders? No; for in this case it would be confined to those who had beautiful necks and shoulders to display. Is it to obtain the admiration of the other sex? That cannot be; for we believe that men look upon this exposure with unmitigated distaste, and that they are inclined to doubt the modesty of those young ladies who make so profuse a display of their charms. But if objectionable in the young, whose youth and beauty might possibly be deemed some extenuation, it is disgusting in those whose bloom is past, whether their forms are developed with a ripe luxuriance which makes the female figures of Rubens

appear in comparison slender and refined, or whether the yellow skin, stretched over the wiry sinews of the neck, remind one of the old women whom some of the Italian masters were accustomed to introduce into their pieces, to enhance, by contrast, the beauty of the principal figures. Every period of life has a style of dress peculiarly appropriate to it, and we maintain that the uncovered bosom so conspicuous in the dissolute reign of Charles II., and from which, indeed, the reign of Charles I. was not, as we learn from the Vandyck portraits, exempt, should be limited, even in its widest extension, to feminine youth, or rather childhood.

If the dress be cut low, the bust should be covered after the modest and becoming fashion of the Italian women, whose highly picturesque costume painters are so fond of representing. The white drapery has a peculiarly good effect, placed as it is between the skin and richly-colored bodice. As examples of this style of dress, we may refer to Sir Charles Eastlake's "Pilgrims in Sight of Rome," "The Grape Gatherer of Capri," by Lehmann, and "The Dancing

Lesson," by Mr. Uwins, all of which are engraved in the *Art Journal*. Another hint may be borrowed from the Italian costume; we may just allude to it *en passant*. If bodices fitting to the shape must be worn, they should be laced across the front in the Italian fashion. Fig. 38. By this contrivance the dress will suit the figure more perfectly, and as the lace may be lengthened or shortened at pleasure, any degree of tightness may be given, and the bodice may be accommodated to the figure without compressing it. We find by the picture in the Louvre called sometimes "Titian's Mistress" that this costume is at least as old as Titian.

We have noticed the changes and transitions of fashion; we must mention one point in which it has continued constant from the time of William Rufus until the present day, and which, since it has entailed years of suffering, and in many instances has caused death, demands our most serious attention. We allude to the pernicious practice of tight lacing, which, as appears from contemporary paintings, was as general on the continent as in England.

The savage American Indian changes the shape of the soft and elastic bones of the skull of his infant by compressing it between two boards; the intelligent but prejudiced Chinese suffers the head to grow as nature formed it, but confines the foot of the female to the size of an infant's; while the highly-intellectual and well-informed European lady limits the growth of her waist by the pressure of the stays. When we consider the importance of the organs which suffer by these customs, surely we must acknowledge that the last is the most barbarous practice of the three.

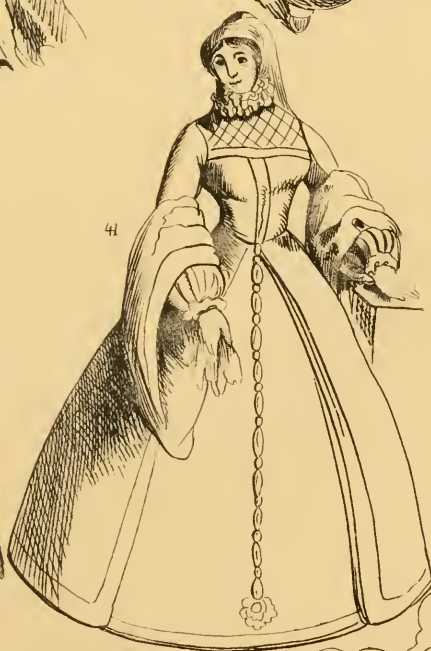
We read in the history of France that the war-like Franks had such a dislike to corpulency that they inflicted a fine upon all who could not encircle their waists with a band of a certain length. How far this extraordinary custom may have been influential in introducing the predilection for small waists among the ladies of that country, as well as our own through the Norman conquerors, we cannot determine.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the whole

of the upper part of the body, from the waist to the chin, was encased in a cuirass of whalebone, the rigidity of which rendered easy and graceful movement impossible. The portrait of Elizabeth by Zuccherro, with its stiff dress and enormous ruff, and which has been so frequently engraved, must be in the memory of all our readers. Stiffness was indeed the characteristic of ladies' dress at this period; the whalebone cuirass, covered with the richest brocaded silks, was united at the waist with the equally stiff vardingale or fardingale, which descended to the feet in the form of a large bell, without a single fold.

There is a portrait in the possession of Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, when quite young, in a dress of this kind; and one cannot help pitying the poor girl's rigid confinement in her stiff and uncomfortable dress. Fig. 41 represents Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry IV., in the fardingale.

With Henrietta Maria dresses cut low in the front, (Fig. 40,) and flowing draperies, as we find them



in the Vandyck portraits, came into fashion, but the figure still retained its stiffness around the waist, and has continued to do so through all the gradations and variations in shape and size of the hoop petticoat, and the scanty draperies of a later period, until the present day.*

If the proportions of the figure were generally understood, we should not hear of those deplorable, and in many cases fatal, results of tight lacing which have unfortunately been so numerous. So general has the pernicious practice been in this country, that a medical friend, who is professor of anatomy in a provincial academy, informed us that there was great difficulty in procuring a model whose waist had not been compressed by stays. That this is true of other localities besides that

* The fardingale differed from the hoop in the following particulars: The hoop petticoat was gathered round the waist, while the fardingale was without a fold of any description. The most extraordinary instances we remember to have seen of the fardingale, are in two or three pictures of the Virgin in the Spanish gallery in the Louvre, where the fardingale in which the Virgin is dressed takes the form of an enormous mitre.

alluded to, may be inferred from a passage in Mr. Hay's lecture to the Society of Arts "On the Geometrical Principles of Beauty," in which he mentions having, for the purpose of verifying his theory, employed "an artist who, having studied the human figure at the life academies on the continent, in London, and in Edinburgh, was well acquainted with the subject," to make a careful drawing of the best living model which could be procured for the purpose. Mr. Hay observes, with reference to this otherwise fine figure, that "the waist has evidently been compressed by the use of stays." In further confirmation of the prevalence of this bad habit, we may refer to Etty's pictures, in which this defect is but too apparent.

We fear, from Mr. Planché's extracts, that the evil was perpetuated by the poets and romance writers of the Norman period; and we are sure that the novelists of our own times have much to answer for on this score. Had they not been forever praising "taper waists," tight lacing would have shared the fate of other fashions, and have been

banished from all civilized society. Similar blame does not attach to the painter and sculptor. The creations of their invention are modelled upon the true principles of proportion and beauty, and in their works a small waist and foot are always accompanied by a slender form. In the mind of the poet and novelist the same associations may take place: when a writer describes the slender waist or small foot, he probably sees *mentally* the whole slender figure. The small waist is a *proportionate* part of the figure of his creation. But there is this difference between the painter and sculptor, and the novelist. The works of the first two address themselves to the eye, and every part of the form is present to the spectator; consequently, as regards form, nothing is left to the imagination. With respect to the poet and novelist, their creations are almost entirely mental ones; their descriptions touch upon a few striking points only, and are seldom so full as to fill up the entire form: much is, therefore, necessarily left to the imagination of the reader. Now, the fashion in

which the reader will supply the details left undetermined by the poet and novelist, and fill up their scanty and shadowy outlines, depends entirely upon his knowledge of form; consequently, if this be small, the images which arise in the mind of the reader from the perusal of works of genius are confused and imperfect, and the proportions of one class of forms are assigned to, or mingled with, those of others, without the slightest regard to truth and nature. When we say, therefore, that writers leave much to the imagination, it may too frequently be understood, to the *ignorance* of the reader; for the imaginations of those acquainted with form and proportion, who generally constitute the minority, always create well-proportioned ideal forms; while the ideal productions of the uneducated, whether expressed by the pencil, the chisel, or the pen, are always ill proportioned and defective.

The most efficient method of putting an end to the practice of tight lacing will be, not merely to point out its unhealthiness, and even dangerous consequences, because these, though imminent, are

uncertain, — every lady who resorts to the practice hoping that she, individually, may escape the penalty, — but to prove that the practice, so far from adding to the beauty of the figure, actually deteriorates it. This is an effect, not doubtful, like the former case, but an actual and positive fact; and, therefore, it supplies a good and sufficient reason, and one which the most obtuse intellect can comprehend, for avoiding the practice. Young ladies will sometimes, it is said, run the risk of ill health for the sake of the interest that in some cases attaches to “delicate health;” but is there any one who would like to be told that, by tight lacing, she makes her figure not only deformed, but positively ugly? This, however, is the plain unvarnished truth; and, by asserting it, we are striking at the root of the evil. The remedy is easy: give to every young lady a general knowledge of form, and of the principles of beauty as applied to the human frame, and when these are better understood, and acted on, tight lacing will die a natural death.

The study of form, on scientific principles, has hitherto been limited entirely to men; and if some women have attained this knowledge, it has been by their own unassisted efforts; that is to say, without the advantages which men derive from lectures and academical studies. In this, as in other acquirements, the pursuit of knowledge, as regards women, is always attended with difficulties. While fully concurring in the propriety of having separate schools for male and female students, we do think that a knowledge of form may be communicated to all persons, and that a young woman will not make the worse wife, or mother, for understanding the economy of the human frame, and for having acquired the power of appreciating its beauties. We fear that there are still some persons whose minds are so contracted as to think that, not only studies of this nature, but even the contemplation of undraped statuary, are derogatory to the delicacy and purity of the female mind; but we are satisfied that the thinking part of the community will approve the course we recommend. Dr. Southwood

Smith, who is so honorably distinguished by his endeavors to promote the sanatory condition of the people, strenuously advocates the necessity of giving to all women a knowledge of the structure and functions of the body, with a view to the proper discharge of their duties as mothers. He remarks (Preface to "Philosophy of Health") on this subject, "I look upon that notion of delicacy which would exclude women from knowledge calculated in an extraordinary degree to open, exalt, and purify their minds, and to fit them for the performance of their duties, as alike degrading to those to whom it affects to show respect, and debasing to the mind that entertains it."

At the present time, the knowledge of what constitutes true beauty of form is, perhaps, best acquired by the contemplation of good pictures and sculpture. This may not be in the power of every body; casts, however, may be frequently obtained from the best statues; and many of the finest works of painting are rendered familiar to us by engravings. The *Art Journal* has done much in diffusing a

taste for art, by the engravings it contains from statues, and from the fine works of English art in the "Vernon Gallery." Engravings, however, can of course represent a statue in one point of view only; but casts are now so cheap as to be within the reach of all persons. Small models of the "Greek Slave" are not unfrequently offered by the Italian image venders for one shilling; and although these are not sharp enough to draw from, the form is sufficiently correct to study the general proportions of the figure; and as this figure is more upright than statues usually are, it may be found exceedingly useful for the above purpose. One of these casts, or, if possible, a sharper and better cast of a female figure, should be found on the *toilette* of every young lady who is desirous of obtaining a knowledge of the proportions and beauties of the figure.

We believe it will always be found that the beauty of a figure depends not only upon the symmetry of the parts individually, but upon the harmony and proportion of each part to the rest.

The varieties of the human form have been classed under the general heads of the broad, the proportionate, and the slender.

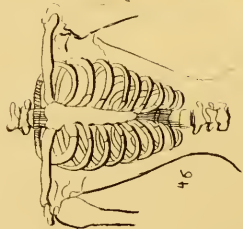
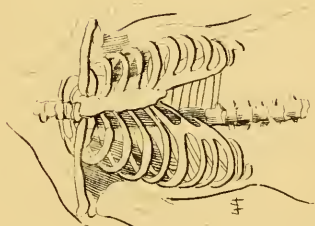
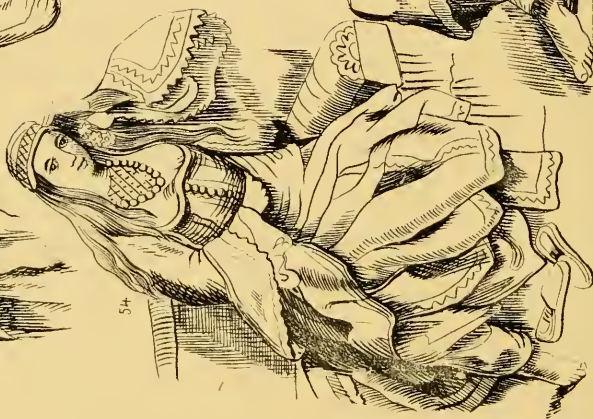
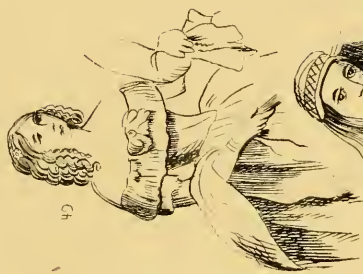
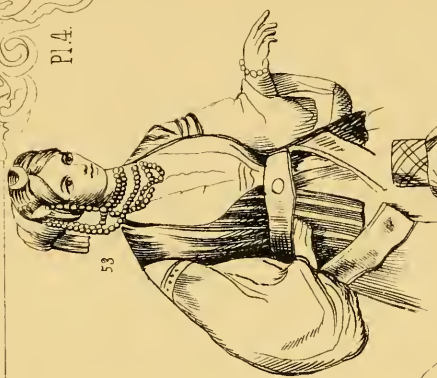
The first betokens strength; and what beauty soever, of a peculiar kind, it may display in the figure of the Hercules, it is not adapted to set off the charms of the female sex. If, however, each individual part bears a proportionate relation to the whole, the figure will not be without its attraction. It is only when the proportions of two or three of the classes are united in one individual, that the figure becomes ungraceful and remarkable. The athletic—if the term may be applied to females—form of the country girl would appear ridiculous with the small waist, and the white and taper fingers, and small feet of the individuals who come under the denomination of slender forms. The tall and delicate figure would lose its beauty if united to the large and broad hands which pertain to the stronger type. A small waist and foot are as great a blemish to an individual of the broad variety as a large waist and foot are to the slender.

“There is a harmony,” says Dr. Wampen, “between all the parts in each kind of form, but each integral is only suited to its own kind of form. True beauty consists not only in the harmony of the elements, but in their being suitable to the kind of form.” Were this fundamental truth but thoroughly understood, small waists and small feet would be at a discount. When they are recognized *as small*, they have ceased to be beautiful, because they are disproportionate. Where every part of a figure is perfectly proportioned to the rest, no single parts appear either large or small.

The ill effects of the stays in a sanatory point of view have been frequently pointed out, and we hope are now understood. It will, therefore, be unnecessary to enlarge on this head. We have asserted that stays are detrimental to beauty of form; we shall now endeavor to show in what particulars.

The natural form of the part of the trunk which forms the waist is not absolutely cylindrical, but is flattened considerably in front and back, so that the





breadth is much greater from side to side than from front to back. This was undoubtedly contrived for wise purposes; yet fashion, with its usual caprice, has interfered with nature, and by promulgating the pernicious error that a rounded form of the waist is more beautiful than the flattened form adopted by nature, has endeavored to effect this change by means of the stays, which force the lower ribs closer together, and so produce the desired form. Nothing can be more ungraceful than the sudden diminution in the size of the waist occasioned by the compression of the ribs, as compared with the gently undulating line of nature; yet, we are sorry to say, nothing is more common. A glance at the cuts, Figs. 43, 44, 45, 46, from the work of Som-mæring, will explain our meaning more clearly than words. Fig. 43 represents the natural waist of the Venus of antiquity; Fig. 45, that of a lady of the modern period. The diagrams 44 and 46 show the structure of the ribs of each.

It will be seen that, by the pressure of the stays, the arch formed by the lower ribs is entirely closed,

and the waist becomes four or five inches smaller than it was intended by nature. Is it any wonder that persons so deformed should have bad health, or that they should produce unhealthy offspring? Is it any wonder that so many young mothers should have to lament the loss of their first born? We have frequently traced tight lacing in connection with this sad event, and we cannot help looking upon it as cause and effect.

By way of further illustration, we refer our readers to some of the numerous engravings from statues in the *Art Journal*, which, though very beautiful, are not distinguished by small waists. We may mention, as examples, Bailey's "Graces;" Marshall's "Dancing Girl Reposing;" "The Toilet," by Wickman; "The Bavaria," by Schwanthaler; and "The Psyche," by Theed.

There is another effect produced by tight lacing, which is too ungraceful in its results to be overlooked, namely, that a pressure on one part is frequently, from the elasticity of the figure, compensated by an enlargement in another part. It

has been frequently urged by inconsiderate persons, that, where there is a tendency to corpulency, stays are necessary to limit exuberant growth, and confine the form within the limits of gentility. We believe that this is entirely a mistake, and that, if the waist be compressed, greater fulness will be perceptible both above and below, just as, when one ties a string tight round the middle of a pillow, it is rendered fuller at each end. With reference to the waist, as to every thing else, the *juste milieu* is literally the thing to be desired.

It has been already observed, that a small waist is beautiful only when it is accompanied by a slender and small figure; but, as the part of the trunk, immediately beneath the arms, is filled with powerful muscles, these, when developed by exercise, impart a breadth to this part of the figure which, by comparison, causes the waist to appear small. A familiar example of this, in the male figure, presents itself in the Hercules, the waist of which appears disproportionately small; yet it is really of the normal size, its apparent smallness being

occasioned by the prodigious development of the muscles of the upper part of the body.

The true way of diminishing the apparent size of the waist, is, as we have remarked above, by increasing the power of the muscles of the upper part of the frame. This can only be done by exercise; and as the habits of society, as now constituted, preclude the employment of young ladies in household duties, they are obliged to find a substitute for this healthy exertion in calisthenics. There was a time when even the queens of Spain did not disdain to employ their royal hands in making sausages; and to such perfection was this culinary accomplishment carried at one period, that it is upon record that the Emperor Charles V., after his retirement from the cares and dignities of the empire, longed for sausages "of the kind which Queen Juana, now in glory, used to pride herself in making in the Flemish fashion." (See Mr. Stirling's "Cloister Life of Charles V.") This is really like going back to the old times, when —

"The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts."

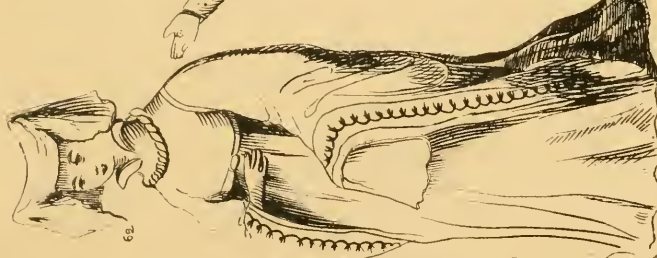
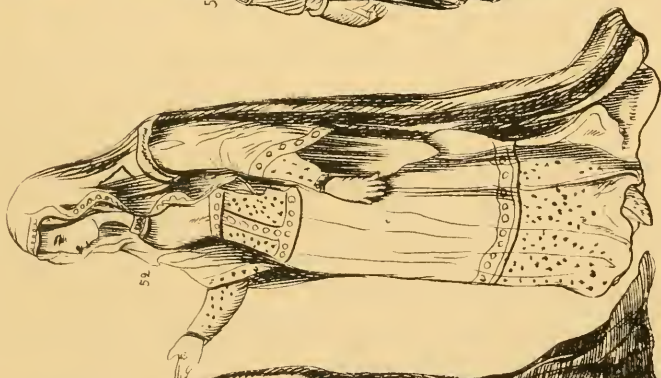
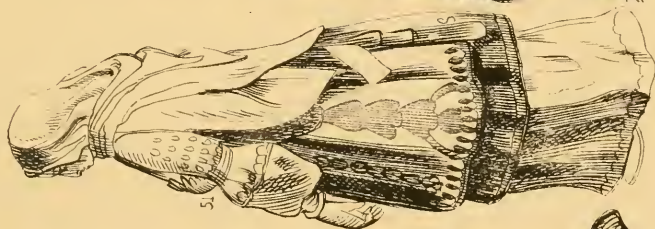
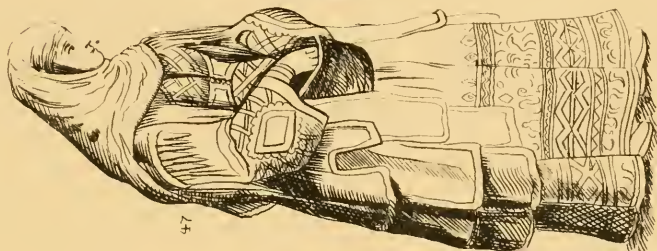
In England, some fifty years ago, the young ladies of the ancient city of Norwich were not considered to have completed their education, until they had spent some months under the tuition of the first confectioner in the city, in learning to make cakes and pastry — an art which they afterwards continued when they possessed houses of their own. This wholesome discipline of beating eggs and whipping creams, kneading biscuits and gingerbread, was calculated to preserve their health, and afford sufficient exercise to the muscles of the arms and shoulders, without having recourse to artificial modes of exertion.

It does not appear that the ancients set the same value upon a small waist as the moderns; for, in their draped female figures, the whole circuit of the waist is seldom visible, some folds of the drapery being suffered to fall over a part, thus leaving its exact extent to the imagination. The same remark is applicable to the great Italian painters, who seldom marked the whole contour of the waist, unless when painting por-

traits, in which case the costume was of course observed.

It was not so, however, with the shoulders, the true width of which was always seen; and how voluminous soever the folds of the drapery around the body, it was never arranged so as to add to the width of the shoulders. Narrow shoulders and broad hips are esteemed beauties in the female figure, while in the male figure the broad shoulders and narrow hips are most admired.

The costume of the modern Greeks is frequently very graceful, (Fig. 47, peasant from the environs of Athens,) and it adapts itself well to the figure, the movements of which it does not restrain. The prevailing characteristics of the costume are a long robe, reaching to the ground, with full sleeves, very wide at the bands. This dress is frequently embroidered with a graceful pattern round the skirt and sleeves. Over it is worn a pelisse, which reaches only to the knees, and is open in front; either without any sleeves, or with tight ones, finishing at the elbows; beneath which are seen the



full sleeves of the long robe. The drapery over the bust is full, and is sometimes confined at the waist by a belt; at others it is suffered to hang loosely until it meets the broad, sash-like girdle which encircles the hips, and which hangs so loosely that the hands are rested in its folds as in a pocket.

The drapery generally terminates at the throat, under a necklace of coins or jewels. The most usual form of head-dress is a veil so voluminous as to cover the head and shoulders; one end of the veil is frequently thrown over the shoulder, or gathered into a knot behind. The shoes, apparently worn only for walking, consist generally of a very thick sole, with a cap over the toes.

One glance at the graceful figures in the plates is sufficient to show how unnecessary stays are to the beauty of the figure. Fig. 48, *Shepherdess of Arcadia*.

The modern Greek costumes which we have selected for our illustrations, from the beautiful work of M. de Stackelberg, (*"Costumes et Peuples de la Grèce Moderne,"* published at Rome, 1825,) suggest

several points for consideration, and some for our imitation. The dress is long and flowing, and high in the neck. It does not add to the width of the shoulders; it conceals the exact size of the waist by the loose pelisse, which is open in front; it falls in a graceful and flowing line from the arm-pits, narrowing a little at the waist, and spreading gently over the hips, when the skirt falls by its own weight into large folds, instead of curving suddenly from an unnaturally small waist over a hideous bustle, and increasing in size downward to the hem of the dress, like a bell, as in the present English costume.

Figs. 42 and 49 are selected from the "Illustrated London News." (Volume for 1851, July to December, pp. 20 and 117.) The one represents out-door costume, the other in-door. Many such are scattered through the pages of our amusing and valuable contemporary. For the out-door costume we beg to refer our readers to the large woodcut in the same volume, (pp. 424, 425.) If a traveller from a distant country, unacquainted with the

English and French fashions, were to contemplate this cut, he would be puzzled to account for the remarkable shape of the ladies, who all, more or less, resemble the figure we have selected for our illustration; and, if he is any thing of a naturalist, he will set them down in his own mind as belonging to a new species of the genus *homo*. Looking at this and other prints of the day, we should think that the artists intended to convey a satire on the ladies' dress, if we did not frequently meet with such figures in real life.

The lady in the evening dress (Fig 49) is from a large woodcut in the same journal representing a ball. This costume, with much pretension to elegance, exhibits most of the faults of the modern style of dress. It combines the indecently low dress, with the pinched waist, and the hoop petticoat. In the figure of the woman of Mitylene, (Fig. 50,) the true form and width of the shoulders are apparent, and the form of the bust is indicated, but not exposed, through the loosely fitting drapery which covers it. In the figure of the

Athenian peasant, (Fig. 47,) the loose drapery over the bust is confined at the waist by a broad band, while the hips are encircled by the sash-like girdle in which the figure rests her hands. The skirt of the pelisse appears double, and the short sleeve, embroidered at the edge, shows the full sleeve of the under drapery, also richly embroidered. In the second figure from the environs of Athens, (Fig. 51,) we observe that the skirt of the pelisse, instead of being set on in gathers or plaits, as our dresses are, is "gored," or sloped away at the top, where it unites almost imperceptibly with the body, giving rise to undulating lines, instead of sudden transitions and curves. In the cut of the Arcadian peasant, (Fig. 48,) the pelisse is shortened almost to a spencer, or *côte hardie*, and it wants the graceful flow of the longer skirt, for which the closely fitting embroidered apron is no compensation. This figure is useful in showing that tight bodies may be fitted to the figure without stays. The heavy rolled girdle on the hips is no improvement. The dress of the Algerine woman, (Fig. 53,)

copied from the "Illustrated London News," bears a strong resemblance to the Greek costume, and is very graceful. It is not deformed either by the pinched waist or the stays. In the tenth century, the French costume (Fig. 52) somewhat resembled that of the modern Greeks; the former, however, had not the short pelisse, but, in its place, the ladies wore a long veil, which covered the head, and reached nearly to the feet.

The Greek and Oriental costume has always been a favorite with painters: the "Vernon Gallery" furnishes us with two illustrations; and the excellent engravings of these subjects in the *Art Journal* enable us to compare the costumes of the two figures while at a distance from the originals. The graceful figure of "The Greek Girl," (engraved in the *Art Journal* for 1850,) painted by Sir Charles Eastlake, is not compressed by stays, but is easy and natural. The white under-drapery is confined at the waist, which is short, by a broad girdle, which appears to encircle it more than once, and adds to the apparent length of the waist; the open jacket, without a

collar, falls gracefully from the shoulders, and conceals the limits of the waist; every thing is easy, natural, and graceful. M. De Stackelberg's beautiful figure of the "Archon's Wife" (Fig. 54) shows the district whence Sir C. Eastlake drew his model. There is the same flowing hair, — from which hang carnations, as in the picture in the "Vernon Gallery," — the same cap, the same necklace. But in the baron's figure, we find the waist encircled with a broad band, six or seven inches in width, while the lady rests her hand on the sash-like girdle, which falls round the hips.

Turn we now to Pickersgill's "Syrian Maid," (engraved in the *Art Journal* for 1850:) here, we see, the artist has taken a painter's license, and represented the fair Oriental in stays, which, we believe, are happily unknown in the East. How stiff and constrained does this figure appear, after looking at Sir C. Eastlake's beautiful "Greek Girl;" how unnatural the form of the chest! The limits of the waist are not visible, it is true, in the "Syrian Maid," but the shadow is so arranged, that the

rounded form, to which we have before alluded, and which fashion deems necessary, is plainly perceptible; and an impression is made that the waist is small and pinched.

We could mention some cases in which the girdle is omitted altogether, without any detriment to the gracefulness of the figure. Such dresses, however, though illustrative of the principle, are not adapted to the costume of real life. In sculpture, however, they frequently occur. We may mention Gibson's statue of her majesty, the female figure in M'Dougall's "Triumph of Love," and "Penelope," by Wyatt, which are engraved in the *Art Journal*, (the first in the year 1846, the others in 1849.) But the drapery of statues can, however, scarcely be taken as a precedent for that of the living subject, and although we mention that the girdle is sometimes dispensed with, we are far from advocating this in practice; nay, we consider the sash or girdle is indispensable; all that we stipulate for is, that it should not be so tight as to compress the figure, or impede circulation.

In concluding our remarks on this subject, we would observe, that the best means of improving the figure are to secure freedom of motion by the use of light and roomy clothing, and to strengthen the muscles by exercise. We may also observe, that singing is not only beneficial to the lungs, but that it strengthens the muscles, and increases the size of the chest, and, consequently, makes the waist appear smaller. Singing, and other suitable exercises in which both arms are used equally, will improve the figure more than all the backboards in the world.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEAD.



HERE is no part of the body which has been more exposed to the vicissitudes of fashion than the head, both as regards its natural covering of hair, and the artificial covering of caps and bonnets. At one time, we read of sprinkling the hair with gold dust; at another time, the bright brown hair, of the color of the horse-chestnut, so common in Italian pictures, was the fashion. This color, as well as that beautiful light golden tint sometimes seen in Italian pictures of the same period, was frequently the result of art, and receipts for producing both tints are still to be found in old books of "*secreti*." Both these were in their turn discarded, and after a time the real color of the hair was lost in pow-

der and pomatum. The improving taste of the present generation is, perhaps, nowhere more conspicuous than in permitting us to preserve the natural color of the hair, and to wear our own, whether it be black, brown, or gray. There is also a marked improvement in the more natural way in which the hair has been arranged during the last thirty years. We allude, particularly, to its being suffered to retain the direction intended by nature, instead of being combed upright, and turned over a cushion a foot or two in height.

These head-dresses, emphatically called, from their French origin, *têtes*, were built or plastered up only once a month: it is easy to imagine what a state they must have been in during the latter part of the time. Madame D'Oberkirch gives, in her *Memoirs*, an amusing description of a novel head-dress of this kind. We transcribe it for the amusement of our readers.

“This blessed 6th of June she awakened me at the earliest dawn. I was to get my hair dressed, and make a grand *toilette*, in order to go to Ver-

sailles, whither the queen had invited the Countess du Nord, for whose amusement a comedy was to be performed. These Court *toilettes* are never-ending, and this road from Paris to Versailles very fatiguing, especially where one is in continual fear of rumpling her petticoats and flounces. I tried that day, for the first time, a new fashion — one, too, which was not a little *génante*. I wore in my hair little flat bottles, shaped to the curvature of the head; into these a little water was poured, for the purpose of preserving the freshness of the natural flowers worn in the hair, and of which the stems were immersed in the liquid. This did not always succeed, but when it did, the effect was charming. *Nothing could be more lovely than the floral wreath crowning the snowy pyramid of powdered hair!*" Few of our readers, we reckon, are inclined to participate in the admiration of the baroness, so fancifully expressed, for this singular head-dress.

We do not presume to enter into the question whether short curls are more becoming than long ones, or whether bands are preferable to curls of

any kind ; because, as the hair of some persons curls naturally, while that of others is quite straight, we consider that this is one of the points which must be decided accordingly as one style or the other is found to be most suitable to the individual. The principle in the arrangement of the hair round the forehead should be to preserve or assist the oval form of the face : as this differs in different individuals, the treatment should be adapted accordingly.

The arrangement of the long hair at the back of the head is a matter of taste ; as it interferes but little with the countenance, it may be referred to the dictates of fashion ; although in this, as in every thing else, simplicity in the arrangement, and grace in the direction of the lines, are the chief points to be considered. One of the most elegant head-dresses we remember to have seen, is that worn by the peasants of the Milanese and Ticinese. They have almost uniformly glossy, black hair, which is carried round the back of the head in a wide braid, in which are placed, at regular intervals, long silver pins, with large heads, which



produce the effect of a coronet, and contrast well with the dark color of the hair.

The examples afforded by modern sculpture are not very instructive, inasmuch as the features selected by the sculptors are almost exclusively Greek, whereas the variety in nature is infinite. With the Greek features has also been adopted the antique style of arranging the hair, which is beautifully simple; that is to say, it is parted in the front, and falling down towards each temple, while the long ends rolled lightly back from the face so as to show the line which separates the hair from the forehead, or rather where it seems, as it were, to blend with the flesh tints—an arrangement which assists in preserving the oval contour of the face, are passed over the top of the ear, and looped into the fillet which binds the head. The very becoming arrangement of the hair in the engraving, from a portrait by Parmegianino, (Fig. 55,) is an adaptation of the antique style, and is remarkable for its simplicity and grace. Not less graceful, although more ornamental, is the

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arrangement of the hair in the beautiful figure called "Titian's Daughter." Fig. 56. In both these instances, we observe the line — if line it may be called — where the color of the hair blends so harmoniously with the delicate tints of the forehead. The same arrangement of the hair round the face may be traced in the pictures by Murillo, and other great masters.

Sir Joshua Reynolds has frequently evinced consummate skill in the arrangement of the hair, so as to show the line which divides it from the forehead. For some interesting remarks on this subject, we refer our readers to an "Essay on Dress," republished by Mr. Murray from the "Quarterly Review." Nothing can be more graceful than Sir Joshua's mode of disposing of the hair when he was able to follow the dictates of his own good taste; and he deserves great credit for the skill with which he frequently treated the enormous head-dresses which in his time disfigured the heads of our countrywomen. The charming figure of Lady Harrington (Fig. 57) would have been perfect without

the superstructure on her beautiful head. How stiff is the head-dress of the next figure, (Fig. 58,) also, after Sir Joshua, when compared with the preceding.

The graceful Spanish mantilla, to which we can only allude, is too elegant to be overlooked: the modification of it, which of late years has been introduced into this country, is to be considered rather as an ornament than as a head-covering. It has been recently superseded by the long bows of ribbon worn at the back of the head—a costume borrowed from the Roman peasants. Fig. 59. The fashion for young people to cover the hair with a silken net, which, some centuries ago, was prevalent both in England and in France, has been again revived. Some of the more recent of these nets are very elegant in form.

The hats and bonnets have, during the last few years, been so moderate in size, and generally so graceful in form, that we will not criticize them more particularly. It will be sufficient to observe that, let the brim be what shape it will, the crown

should be nearly of the form and size of the head. If this principle were always kept in view, as it should be, we should never again see the monster hats and bonnets which, some years ago, and even in the memory of persons now living, caricatured the lovely forms of our countrywomen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DRESS.



WE shall consider the dress, by which we mean, simply, the upper garment worn within doors, as consisting of three parts—the sleeve, the body, and the skirt.

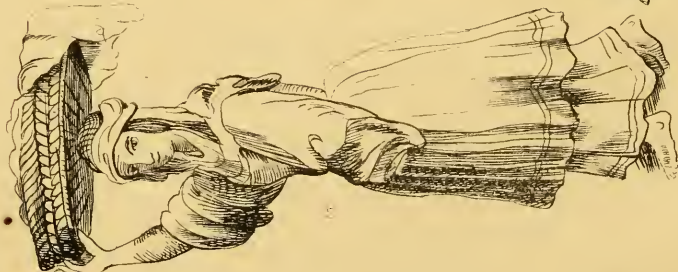
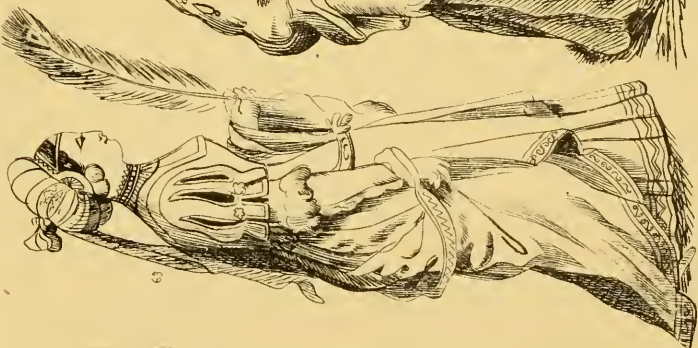
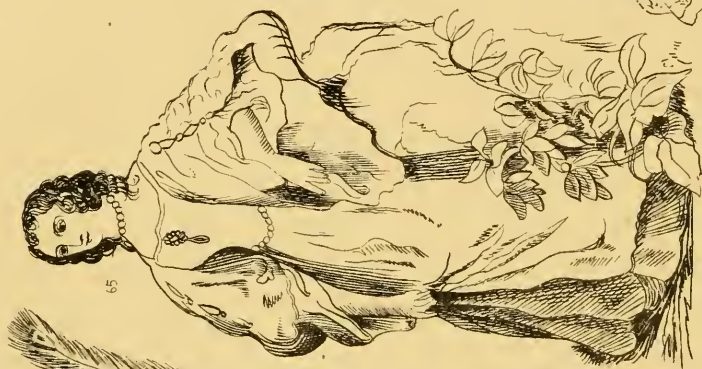
The sleeve has changed its form as frequently as any part of our habiliments: sometimes it reached to the wrist, sometimes to a short distance below the shoulder. Sometimes it was tight to the arm; sometimes it fell in voluminous folds to the hands; now it was widest at the top, then widest at the bottom. To large sleeves themselves there is no objection, in a pictorial point of view, provided that their point of junction with the shoulder is so conspicuous that they do not add to the apparent width of the body in this part. The lines

of the sleeves should be flowing; and they are much more graceful when they are widest in the lower part, especially when so open as to display to advantage the beautiful form of the wrist and forearm. In this way, they partake of the pyramid, while the inelegant gigot sleeve, which for so long a period enjoyed the favor of the ladies, presents the form of a cone reverted, and is obviously out of place in the human figure. When the large sleeve, supported by canes or whalebones, forms a continuous line with the shoulder, it gives an unnatural width to this part of the figure — an effect that is increased by the large collar which conceals the point where the sleeve meets the dress. Examples of the large, open sleeve, in its extreme character, may be studied with most advantage in the portraits of Vandyck. Fig. 60, Lady Lucy Percy, after Vandyck. The effect of these sleeves is frequently improved by their being lined with a different color, and sometimes by contrasting the rich silk of the outer sleeve with the thin gauze or lace which forms the immediate cov-

ering of the arm. The figures in the plates will show the comparative gracefulness of two kinds of large sleeves, namely, that which is widest at the top, and that which is widest below. If the outline of the central figure of our more modern group, (Fig. 61,) — consisting of three figures, which is copied from a French work, — were filled up with black, a person ignorant of the fashion might, from the great width of the shoulders, have mistaken it for the Farnese Hercules in petticoats.

The large sleeves, tight in the upper part, and enlarging gradually to the wrist, which are worn by the modern Greeks, are extremely graceful. When these are confined below the elbow, which is sometimes done for convenience, they resemble somewhat the elbow sleeves with wide ruffles which were so common in the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Sleeves like those now worn in Greece were fashionable in France in the tenth century, and again about the beginning of the sixteenth century. They were also worn by Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry IV., and are seen in Fig. 41.

A very elegant sleeve, fitting nearly close at the shoulder, and becoming very full and long till it falls in graceful folds almost to the feet, prevailed in England during the time of Henry V. and VI. Fig. 62, copied from a manuscript of the time of Henry V., now preserved in the British Museum. On the authority of Professor Heideloff, it is said to have existed also in Flanders in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and in France in the fifteenth century. In the examples of continental costume, the *tout ensemble* is graceful, and especially the head-dress; while in England the elegant sleeve is accompanied with very short waists, and with the hideous, horned head-dresses then fashionable. The effect of these sleeves much resembles that of the mantles of the present day, and from its wide flow is only adapted for full dress, or out-of-door costume. The sleeves worn under these full ones were generally tight. At a much later period, the large sleeves were made of more moderate dimensions, both in length and width, and a full sleeve of fine lawn or muslin,



fastened at the wrist with a band, and edged with a lace ruffle, was worn beneath. This kind of sleeve has recently been again introduced into England, but has given place to another form, in which the under sleeve of lace or muslin, being of the same size as the upper, suffers the lower part of the arm to be visible. The effect of this sleeve, which is certainly becoming to a finely-formed arm, is analogous to that of the elbow sleeve, which, with its deep ruffles of point lace, is frequent on the portraits of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The slashed sleeve, criticized by Shakspeare in the "Taming of the Shrew," was sometimes very elegant. The form in which it appears in Fig. 63, worn in the fifteenth century, is particularly graceful. Not so, however, the lower part of the sleeve.

In the preceding remarks, we have considered the sleeve merely in a picturesque point of view, without reference to its convenience or inconvenience.

The length of the waist has always been a matter of caprice. Sometimes the girdle was placed

nearly under the arms; sometimes it passed to the opposite extreme, and was suffered to fall upon the hips. Sometimes it was drawn tightly round the middle, when it seemed to cut the body almost in two, like an hourglass. Judging from what we see, we should say that this is a feat which many ladies of the present time are endeavoring to achieve. The first and third cases are almost equally objectionable, because they distort the figure. The hip girdle, which is common in Greece (as shown in Figs. 48 and 53) and Oriental countries, prevailed also in England and France some centuries ago. The miniatures of old manuscripts furnish us with examples of long-waisted dresses fitting closely to the person, sometimes stiffened like the modern stays, at others yielding to the figure. The waist of this kind of dress reached to the hips, where it was joined to the full petticoat, which was gathered round the top—an extremely ungraceful fashion. The hip girdle, properly used, is, however, by no means inelegant. It is not at all necessary that it should coincide with the waist

of the dress; it should be merely looped or clasped loosely round the figure, and suffered to fall to its place by its own weight. But to enable it to do so in a graceful manner, it is essential that the skirt of the dress should be so united with the body as to produce no harsh lines of separation, or sudden changes of curvature; as, for example, when the skirt is set on in full plaits, or gathers, and spread over a hoop. We have before noticed, that this point was attended to by Rubens, (Fig. 66,) by Vandyck, (Fig. 65,) by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and by the modern Greeks. We refer also to the elegant figure 64. The most natural situation for the girdle, or point of junction of the body with the skirt, is somewhere between the end of the breast bone and the last rib, as seen in front — a space of about three or four inches. Fashion may dictate the exact spot, but within this space it cannot be positively wrong. The effect is good when the whole space is filled with a wide sash folded round the waist, as in Sir C. Eastlake's "Greek Girl," or some of the graceful portraits by

Sir Joshua Reynolds. How much more elegant is a sash of this description than the stiff line which characterizes the upper part of the dress of "Sancta Victoria." (Fig. 64.) The whalebone, or busk, is absolutely necessary to keep the dress in its proper place. The resemblance in form between the body of the dress of this figure and those now or recently in fashion cannot fail to arrest the attention of the reader. Stiff, though, as it undoubtedly is, the whole dress is superior to the modern in the general flow of the lines uniting the body and skirt. Long skirts are more graceful than short ones, and a train of moderate length adds to the elegance of a dress, but not to its convenience. Long dresses, also, add to the apparent height of a figure, and for this reason they are well adapted to short persons. For the same reason, waists of moderate length are more generally becoming than those that are very long, because the latter, by shortening the skirt of the dress, diminish the apparent height.

Besides the variation in length, the skirts of dresses have passed through every gradation of

fulness. At one time, it was the fashion to slope gradually from the waist, without gathers or plaits; then a little fulness was admitted at the back; then a little at the front, also. The next step was to carry the fulness all round the waist. In the graceful costume of the time of Vandyck, and even in the more stiff and formal dress delineated in the pictures of Rubens, the skirt was united to the body by large, flat plaits, when the fulness expanded gradually and gracefully, and the rich material of the dress spread in well-arranged folds to the feet. The lines were gently undulating and graceful, and that unnatural and clumsy contrivance called a "bustle" — a near relation of the hoop and fardingale — was at that time happily unknown. This principle of uniting the skirt gradually with the body of the dress is carried out to the fullest extent by the modern Greeks. In the figure of the peasant from the neighborhood of Athens, (Fig. 47,) the pelisse is made without gathers or plaits: the skirt, which hangs full round the knees, is "gored" or sloped away till it fits the

body at the waist. The long underskirt is, as we find from the figure of the woman of Makrinitza, (Fig. 67,) gathered several times, so as to lie flat to the figure, instead of being spread over the inelegant "bustle." It is only necessary to compare these graceful figures, in which due regard has been paid to the undulating lines of the figure, with a fashionable lady of the present day, whose "polka jacket," or whatever may be the name of this article of dress, is cut with violent and deep curves, to enable it to spread itself over the bustle and prominent folds of the dress.

Not satisfied with the bustle in the upper part of the skirt, some ladies of the present day have returned to the old practice of wearing hoops, to make the dresses stand out at the base. These are easily recognized in the street by the "swagging"—no other term will exactly convey the idea—from side to side of the hoops, an effect which is distinctly visible as the wearer walks along. It is difficult to imagine what there is so

attractive in the fardingale and hoop, that they should have prevailed, in some form or other, for so many years, and that they should have maintained their ground in spite of the cutting, though playful, raillery of the "Spectator," and the jeers and caricatures of less refined censors of the eccentricities of dress. They were not recommended either by beauty of line or convenience, but by the tyrant Fashion, and we owe some gratitude to George IV., who banished the last relics of this singular fashion from the court dress, of which, until his time, it continued to form a part. Who could imagine that there would be an attempt to revive the hoop petticoat in the nineteenth century? We invite our readers to contrast the lines of the drapery in the figures after Vandyck, (Figs. 60 and 61,) and those in the modern Greek costume, (Figs. 51 and 54,) with that of a lady in a hoop, after a satirical painter, Hogarth, (Fig. 68,) and two figures from a design by Jules David, in "Le Moniteur de la Mode," a modern fashionable authority in dress. (Figs. 69 and 70.)

There can be no doubt which is the most graceful. The width of the shoulders and the tight waist of the latter, will not escape the notice of our readers.

CHAPTER V.

THE FEET.



THE same bad taste which insists upon a small waist, let the height and proportions of the figure be what they will, decrees that a small foot is essential to beauty.

Size is considered of more importance than form ; and justly so if it is a *sine qua non* that the foot must be small, because the efforts that are made to diminish its size generally render it deformed. We have before mentioned that to endeavor to diminish the size of the human body in a particular part, is like tying a string round the middle of a pillow ; it only makes it larger at the extremities. It is so with the waist, it is so with the foot. If it be crippled in length, or in width across the toes, it spreads over the instep and sides. The Italians

and other nations of the south of Europe have smaller hands and feet than the Anglo-Saxons; and as this fact is generally known, it is astonishing that people of sense should persist in crippling themselves merely for the reputation of having small feet. Here again we have to complain of poets and romance writers; ladies would not have pinched their feet into small shoes, if these worthies had not sung the praises of "tiny feet."

"Her feet, beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light."

Nor are painters — portrait painters, we mean, and living ones too — it is needless however, to mention names — entirely free from blame for thus ministering to vanity and false taste. They have sacrificed truth to fashion in painting the feet smaller than they could possibly be in nature.

But it is not only with the endeavor to cripple their dimensions that we are inclined to quarrel. We object *in toto* to the shape of the shoe, which bears but little resemblance to that of the foot. We have

heard persons say that they could never see any beauty in a foot. No wonder, when they saw none but those that were deformed by corns and bunions. How unlike is such a foot to the beautiful little—for little it really is in this case—fat foot of a child, before its beauty has been spoiled by shoes, or even to those of the barefooted children one sees so frequently in the street. Were it not for these opportunities of seeing nature we, in this country, should have but little idea of the true shape of the human foot, except what we learn from statues. According to a recent traveller, we must go to Egypt to see beautiful feet. It is impossible, he says, to see any thing more exquisite than the feet and hands of the female peasants. The same beauty is conspicuous in the Hindoo women.

Let us compare now the shape of the foot with that of the sole of a shoe. When the foot is placed on the ground, the toes spread out, the great toe is in a straight line with the inner side of the foot, and there is an opening between this and the second toe. The ancients availed themselves of

this opening to pass through it one of the straps that suspended the sandal.

The moderns on the contrary press the toes closely together, in order to confine them within the limits of the shoe; the consequence is, that the end of the great toe is pressed towards the others, and out of the straight line, the joint becomes enlarged, and thus the foundation is laid for a bunion; while the toes, forced one upon another, become distorted and covered with corns.

One of the consequences of this imprisonment of our toes is, that, from being squeezed so closely together, they become useless. Let any one try the experiment of walking barefooted across the room, and while so doing look at the foot. The toes, when unfettered by the shoes, spread out and divide from one another, and the body rests on a wider and firmer base. We begin to find we have some movement in our toes; yet, how feeble is their muscular power, compared with that of persons who are unaccustomed to the use of shoes!

The Hindoo uses his toes in weaving; the Aus-

tralian savage is as handy (if the term can be applied to feet) with this member, as another man is with his hands; it is the unsuspected instrument with which he executes his thefts. The country boy, who runs over the roof of a house like a cat, takes off his shoes before he attempts the hazardous experiment; he has a surer hold with his foot on the smooth slates and sloping roof. The exercise of the muscles of the foot has the effect of increasing the power of those of the calf of the leg; and the thinner the sole, and the more pliant the materials of which the shoe is made, the more the power is developed.

Dancing masters, who habitually wear thin shoes, have the muscles of the leg well developed, while ploughmen, who wear shoes with soles an inch thick, have very little calf to their leg. The French sabot is, we consider, better than the closely fitting shoe of our country people; because it is so large, that it requires some muscular exertion to keep it in its place. We have frequently seen French boys running in sabots, the foot rising at every step

almost out of the unyielding wooden shoe. Wooden clogs and pattens are as bad as the thick shoes of the country people. When clogs are necessary, the sole should be made of materials which will yield to the motion of the foot. The American Indian's moccasins are a much better covering for the foot than our shoes.

If thick soles are objectionable by impeding the free movement of the limb, what shall we say to the high heel which was once so popular, and which threatens again to come into fashion? It is to be hoped, however, when the effects of wearing high heels are duly considered, that this pernicious custom will not make progress. It is well for their poor unfortunate votaries, that the introduction of certain fashions is gradual; that both mind and body—perhaps we should be more correct in saying the person of the wearer and the eye of the spectator—are, step by step, prepared for the extreme point which certain fashions attain; they have their rise, their culminating point, and their decline. The attempt to exchange the short waists, worn some

thirty or forty years ago, for the very long waists seen during the past year, would have been unsuccessful; the transition would have been too great — too violent; the change was effected, but it was the work of many years. The same thing took place with regard to the high head-dresses which were so deservedly ridiculed by Addison, and in an equally marked degree with respect to high heels. The shoes in the cut, after Gainsborough, (Fig. 71,) are fair specimens of what were in fashion in his time. Let the reader compare the line of the sole with that of the human foot placed, as nature intended it, flat on the ground. The heel was in some cases four and a half inches high; the line, therefore, must have been in this case, a highly inclined plane, undulating in its surface, like the “line of beauty” of Hogarth. The position of the foot is that of a dancer resting on the toes, excepting that the heel is supported, and the strain over the instep and contraction of the muscles of the back of the leg and heel must be considerable; so much so we are told, that the contraction of the latter becomes

habitual; consequently, those persons who have accustomed themselves to the use of high heels, are never afterwards able to do without them. It is said that "pride never feels pain;" we should think the proverb was made for those who wear high heels, for we are told, although we cannot speak from personal experience, that the pain on first wearing shoes of this kind, in which the whole weight of the body seems to thrust the toes forward into the shoe, is excruciating; nothing but fashion could reconcile one to such voluntary suffering. The peas in the shoes of the pilgrims could scarcely be more painful.

It was with some surprise that we found among M. Stackelberg's graceful costumes of modern Greece a pair of high-heeled shoes, (Fig. 72,) which might rival in ugliness and inconvenience any of those worn in England.

We have known an instance where the lady's heels were never less than an inch and a half high. We were sorry to observe some of these high-heeled shoes in the great exhibition, and still more so, to see that shoes with heels an inch high are likely to be



fashionable this season. Could we look forward to this height as the limit of the fashion, we might reconcile ourselves to it for a time; but, judging from past experience, there is reason to fear that the heel will become continually higher, until it attains the elevation of former years. Not content with imprisoning our feet in tight shoes, and thereby distorting their form and weakening their muscular power, we are guilty of another violence towards nature. Nature has made our toes to turn inwards; when man is left to himself the toes naturally take this direction, though in a much less degree than in the infant. The American Indian will trace a European by his footprints, which he detects by the turning out of the toes; a lesson we are taught in our childhood, and especially by our dancing master. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, "The gestures of children, being all dictated by nature, are graceful; affectation and distortion come in with the dancing master." Now, observe the consequence of turning out the toes. The inner ankle is bent downwards towards the ground, and the knees are drawn in-

wards, producing the deformity called knock-kneed ; thus the whole limb is distorted, and consequently weakened ; there is always a want of muscular power in the legs of those who turn their toes very much outwards. It must be remarked, however, that women, from the greater breadth of the frame at the hips, naturally turn the toes out more than men. In this point also, statues may be studied with advantage. Where form only is considered, it is generally safer to refer to examples of sculpture than painting ; because in the latter, the artist is apt to lose sight of this primary object in his attention to color and form ; besides, it is the sculptor only, who makes an exact image of a figure which is equally perfect, seen from all points of view. The painter makes only a pictorial or perspective representation of nature, as seen from one point of view only.

What pains we take to distort and disfigure the beautiful form that nature has bestowed upon the human race ! Now building a tower on the head, then raising the heel at the expense of the toe ; at

one time confining the body in a case of whalebone, and compressing it at the waist like an hour glass ; at another, surrounding it with the enormous and ungraceful hoop, till the outline of the figure is so altered, that a person can scarcely recognize her own shadow as that of a human being.

CHAPTER VI.

REMARKS ON PARTICULAR COSTUMES.



WE must now offer a few brief remarks upon certain costumes which appear to us most worthy of our attention and study, for their general elegance and adaptation to the figure.

Of the modern Greek we have already spoken. The style of dress which has been immortalized by the pencil of Vandyck is considered among the most elegant that has ever prevailed in this country. It is not, however, faultless. The row of small curls around the face, however becoming to some persons, is somewhat formal; and although the general arrangement of the hair, which preserves the natural size and shape of the head, is more graceful than that of the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds, we think it would have been more pleasing had it left visible

the line which divides the hair from the forehead. With regard to the dress itself, it is apparent, in the first place, that the figures are spoiled by stays; secondly, that the dress is cut too low in front; and thirdly, that the large sleeves sometimes give too great width in front to the shoulders. These defects are, in some degree, counterbalanced by the graceful flow of the ample drapery, and of the large sleeves, which are frequently widest at their lower part, and by the gently undulating line which unites the waist of the dress with the skirt. The Vandyck dress, with its voluminous folds, is, however, more appropriate to the inhabitants of palaces, than to the ordinary occupants of this working-day world. The drapery is too wide and flowing for convenience. The annexed cut, (Fig. 73,) representing Charlotte de la Tremouille, the celebrated Countess of Derby, exhibits some of the defects and many of the beauties of the Vandyck dress.

Lely's half-dressed figures may be passed over without comment; they are draped, not dressed. Kneller's are more instructive on the subject of

costume. The dress of Queen Anne, (Fig. 74,) in Kneller's portrait, is graceful and easy. The costume is a kind of transition between the Vandyck and Reynolds style. The sleeves are smaller at the shoulder than in the former, and larger at the lower part than in the latter; in fact, they resemble those now worn by the modern Greeks. The dress is cut higher round the bust, and is longer in the waist than the Vandycks, while the undulating line uniting the body and skirt is still preserved. While such good examples were set by the painters—who were not, however, the inventors of the fashions they painted—it is astonishing that these graceful styles of dress should have been superseded in real life by the lofty head-dresses and preposterous fashions which prevailed during the same period and long afterwards, and which even the ironical and severe remarks of Addison, in the “Spectator,” were unable to banish from the circles of fashion.

Speaking of the dresses of ladies during the reigns of James II. and William III., Mr. Planché, in his “History of British Costumes,” says, “The tower or

commode was still worn, and the gowns and petticoats flounced and furbelowed, so that every part of the garment was in curl;” and a lady of fashion “looked like one of those animals,” says the “Spectator,” “which in the country we call a Friesland hen.” But in 1711 we find Mr. Addison remarking, “The whole sex is now dwarfed and shrunk into a race of beauties that seems almost another species. I remember several ladies who were once nearly seven foot high, that at present want some inches of five. How they come to be thus curtailed I cannot learn; whether the whole sex be at present under any penance which we know nothing of, or whether they have cast their head-dresses in order to surprise us with something in that kind which shall be entirely new: though I find most are of opinion they are at present like trees lopped and pruned, that will certainly sprout up and flourish with greater heads than before.”

The costume of the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds, as treated by this great artist, though less splendid, appears to us, with the exception of the head-dress,

nearly as graceful, and far more convenient than the Vandyck dress. It is more modest, more easy, and better adapted to show the true form of the shoulders, while the union of the body of the dress with the skirt is effected in the same graceful manner as in the Vandyck portraits. The materials of the drapery in the latter is generally silks and satins; of the former, it is frequently muslin and stuff of a soft texture, which clings more closely to the form. That much of the elegance of both styles of dress is to be attributed to the skill and good taste of the painters, is evident from an examination of portraits by contemporary artists. Much also may be ascribed to the taste of the wearer.

There are some people who, though habited in the best and richest clothes, never appear well dressed; their garments, rumpled and untidy, look as if they had been pitched on them, like hay, with a fork; while others, whose dress consists of the most homely materials, appear well dressed, from the neatness and taste with which their clothes are arranged.

Many of the costumes of Gainsborough's portraits



are elegant and graceful, with the frequent exception of the extravagant head-dress and the high-heeled shoes. The easy and very pleasing figure, (Fig. 75,) after this accomplished artist, is not exempt from the above defects.

In our next illustration, (Fig. 76,) Gainsborough has not been so happy. The lady is almost lost in her voluminous and fluttering drapery, and the dishevelled hair and the enormous hat give to the figure much of the appearance of a caricature.

Leaving now the caprices of fashion, we must notice a class of persons who, from a religious motive, have resisted for two hundred years the tyranny of fashion, and, until recently, have transmitted the same form of dress from mother to daughter for nearly the same period of years. The ladies of the Society of Friends, or, as they are usually called, "Quakers," are still distinguished by the simplicity and neatness of their dress — the quiet drabs and browns of which frequently contrast with the richness of the material — and by the absence of all ornament and frippery. Every part of their dress

is useful and convenient; it has neither frills, nor flounces, nor trimmings to carry the dirt and get shabby before the dress itself, nor wide sleeves to dip in the plates and lap up the gravy and sauces, nor artificial flowers, nor bows of ribbons. The dress is long enough for decency, but not so long as to sweep the streets, as many dresses and shawls are daily seen to do. Some few years back the Quaker ladies might have been reproached with adhering to the letter, while they rejected the spirit, of their code of dress by adhering too literally to the costume handed down to them. The crowns of their caps were formerly made very high, and for this reason it was necessary that the crowns of their bonnets should be high enough to admit the cap crown; hence the peculiarly ugly and remarkable form of this part of the dress. The crown of the cap has, however, recently been lowered, and the Quaker ladies, with much good sense, have not only modified the form of their bonnets, but have also adopted the straw and drawn silk bonnet in their most simple forms. In the style of their dress, also, they

occasionally approach so near the fashions generally worn, that they are no longer distinguishable by the singularity of their dress, but by its simplicity and chasteness.

We venture now to devote a few words to the Bloomer costume, (Fig. 77,) although we are aware that we are treading on tender ground, especially as the costume involves a sudden and complete change in the dress. Independently of its merits or demerits, there are several reasons why it did not succeed in this country. In the first place, as we have before observed, it originated in America, and was attempted to be introduced through the middle ranks. In the second place, the change which it endeavored to effect was too sudden. Had the alteration commenced with the higher classes, and the change been effected gradually, its success might possibly have been different. Thirdly, the large hat, so well adapted to the burning sun of America, was unnecessary, and remarkable when forming a part of the costume of adult ladies in this country, although we have seen that hats quite as large were

worn during the time of Gainsborough. Another reason for the ill success of the Bloomer costume is to be found in the glaring and frequently ill-assorted colors of the prints of it, which were every where exposed in the shop windows. By many sober-minded persons, the large hat and glaring colors were looked upon as integral parts of the costume. The numerous caricatures also, and the injudicious attempts to make it popular by getting up "Bloomer Balls," contributed to render the costume ridiculous and unpopular.

Setting aside the hat, the distinguishing characteristics of the costume are the short dress, and a polka jacket fitting the body at the throat and shoulders, and confined at the waist by a silken sash, and the trousers fastened by a band round the ankle, and finished off with a frill. On the score of modesty there can be no objection to the dress, since the whole of the body is covered. On the ground of convenience it recommends itself to those who, having the superintendence of a family, are obliged frequently to go up and down stairs, on which

occasions it is always necessary to raise the dress before or behind, according to circumstances. The objection to the trousers is not to this article of dress being worn, since that is a general practice, but to their being seen. Yet we suspect few ladies would object on this account to appear at a fancy ball in the Turkish costume.

The disadvantages of the dress are its novelty — for we seldom like a fashion to which we are entirely unaccustomed — and the exposure which it involves of the foot, the shape of which, in this country, is so frequently distorted by wearing tight shoes of a different shape from the foot. The short dress is objectionable in another point of view, because, as short petticoats diminish the apparent height of the person, none but those who possess tall and elegant figures will look well in this costume; and appearance is generally suffered to prevail over utility and convenience. If to the Bloomer costume had been added the long under-dress of the Greek women, or had the trousers been as full as those worn by the Turkish and East Indian women,

the general effect of the dress would have been much more elegant, although perhaps less useful. Setting aside all considerations of fashion, as we always do in looking at the fashions which are gone by, it was impossible for any person to deny that the Bloomer costume was by far the most elegant, the most modest, and the most convenient.

CHAPTER VII.

ORNAMENT — ECONOMY.

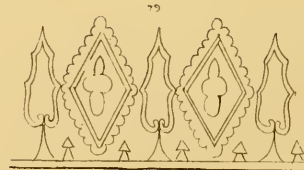
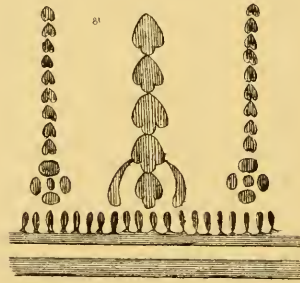
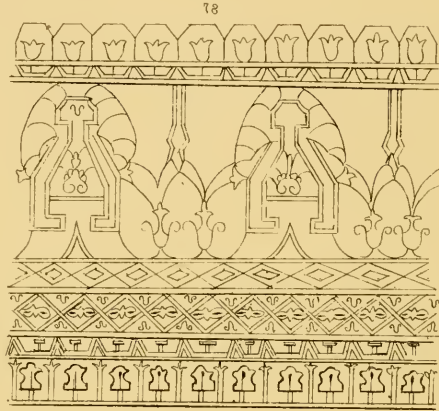
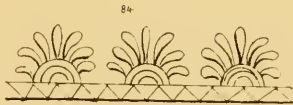
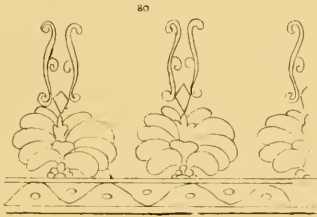
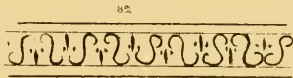
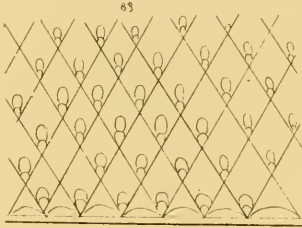


ORNAMENT, although not an integral part of dress, is so intimately connected with it, that we must devote a few words to the subject.

Under the general term of ornament we shall include bows of ribbon, artificial flowers, feathers, jewels, lace, fringes, and trimmings of all kinds. Some of these articles appear to be suited to one period of life, some to another. Jewels, for instance, though suitable for middle age, seem misplaced on youth, which should always be characterized by simplicity of apparel; while flowers, which are so peculiarly adapted to youth, are unbecoming to those advanced in years; in the latter case there is contrast without harmony; it is like uniting May with December.

The great principle to be observed with regard to ornament is, that it should be appropriate, and appear designed to answer some useful purpose. A brooch, or a bow of ribbon, for instance, should fasten some part of the dress; a gold chain should support a watch or an eyeglass. Trimmings are useful to mark the borders or edges of the different parts of the dress; and in this light they add to the variety, while by their repetition they conduce to the regularity of the ornamentation.

Ornament is so much a matter of fashion, that beyond the above remarks it scarcely comes within the scope of our subject. There is one point, however, to which the present encouragement of works of design induces us to draw the attention of our readers. We have already borrowed from the beautiful work of M. de Stackelberg, some of the female figures in illustration of our views with regard to dress; we have now to call the attention of our readers to the patterns embroidered on the dresses. These are mostly of classic origin, and prove that the descendants of the Greeks have still sufficient

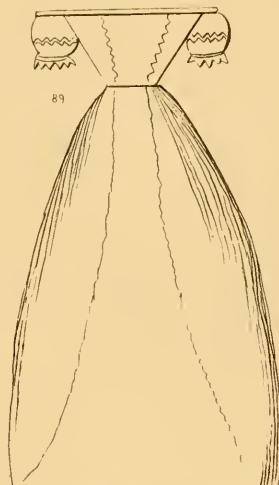
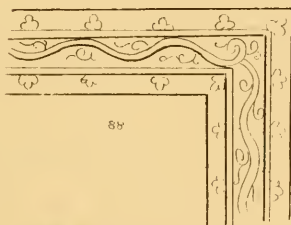
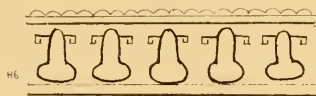


good taste to appreciate and adopt the designs of their glorious ancestors. The figures in the plates being too small to show the patterns, we have enlarged some of them from the original work, in order to show the style of design still cultivated among the peasants of Greece, and also because we think the designs may be applied to other materials besides dress. Some of them appear not inappropriate to iron work. When will our people be able to show designs of such elegance? Fig. 78 is an enlarged copy of the embroidery on the robe of the peasant from the environs of Athens, (Fig. 49.) It extends, as will be seen, half way up the skirt. Fig. 79 is from the sleeve of the same dress. Fig. 80 is the pattern embroidered on the sleeve of the pelisse. Fig. 81 is the pattern from the waist to the hem of the skirt of an Athenian peasant's dress, (Fig. 51.) Fig. 82 is the border to the shawl; Fig. 83, the sleeve of the last-mentioned dress; Fig. 84, the design on the apron of the Arcadian peasant, (Fig. 48.) Fig. 85 is the border of the same dress. Fig. 86 is the pattern round the hem of the long

under-dress of the Athenian peasant, (Fig. 51;) Fig. 87, the border of a shawl, or something of the kind. Fig. 88 is another example. The brocade dress of Sancta Victoria (Fig. 64) offers a striking contrast to the simple elegance of the Greek designs. It is too large for the purpose to which it is employed, and not sufficiently distinct; and, although it possesses much variety, it is deficient in regularity; and one of the elements of beauty in ornamental design, namely, repetition, appears to be entirely wanting. In these respects, the superiority of the Greek designs is immediately apparent. They unite at once symmetry with regularity, and variety with repetition.

The examination of these designs suggests the reflection that when we have once attained a form of dress which combines ease and elegance with convenience, we should tax our ingenuity in inventing ornamental designs for decorating it, rather than seek to discover novel forms of dress.

The endless variety of textile fabrics which our manufacturers are constantly producing, the variety,



also, in the colors, will, with the embroidery patterns issued by our schools of design, suffice to appease the constant demand for novelty, which exists in an improving country, without changing the form of our costume, unless to adopt others which reason and common sense point out as superior to that in use. We are told to try all things, and to hold fast to that which is good. The maxim is applicable to dress as well as to morals.

The subject of economy in dress, an essential object with many persons, now claims our attention. We venture to offer a few remarks on this head. Our first recommendation is to have but few dresses at a time, and those extremely good. If we have but few dresses, we wear them, and wear them out while they are in fashion; but if we have many dresses at once, some of them become quite old-fashioned before we have done with them. If we are rich enough to afford the sacrifice, the old-fashioned dress is got rid of; if not, we must be content to appear in a fashion that has long been

superseded; and we look as if we had come out of the tombs, or as if one of our ancestors had stepped out of her picture frame, and again walked the earth.

As to the economy of selecting the best materials for dresses, we argue thus: Every dress must be lined and made up, and we pay as much for making and lining an inferior article, as we do for one of the best quality. Now, a good silk or merino will wear out two bad ones; therefore, one good dress, lining and making, will cost less than two inferior ones, with the expenses of lining and making them. In point of appearance, also, there is no comparison between the two; the good dress will look well to the last, while one of inferior quality will soon look shabby. When a good silk dress has become too shabby to be worn longer as a dress, it becomes, when cut up, useful for a variety of purposes; whereas an inferior silk, or one purely ornamental, is, when left off, good for nothing.

Plain dresses, that is to say, those of a single color, and without a pattern, are more economical

as well as more quiet in their appearance than those of various colors. They are also generally less expensive, because something is always paid for the novelty of the fashion; besides, colored and figured dresses bear the date on the face of them, as plainly as if it was there in printed characters. The ages of dress fabrics are known by the pattern; therefore dresses of this description should be put on as soon as purchased, and worn out at once, or they will appear old-fashioned. There is another reason why vari-colored dresses are less economical than others. Where there are several colors, they may not all be equally fast, and if only one of them fades the dress will lose its beauty. Trimmings are not economical; besides their cost in the first instance, they become shabby before the dress, and if removed, they generally leave a mark where they have been, and so spoil the appearance of the dress.

Dresses made of one kind of material only, are more durable than those composed of two; as, for instance, of cotton and silk, of cotton and worsted,

or of silk and worsted. When the silk is merely thrown on the face of the material, it soon wears off. This is also the case in those woollen or cotton goods which have a silken stripe.

The question of economy also extends to colors, some of which are much more durable than others. For this we can give no rule, except that drabs and other "Quaker colors," as they are frequently called, are amongst the most permanent of all colors. For other colors we must take the word of the draper. There is no doubt, however, but that the most durable colors are the cheapest in the end. In the selection of colors, the expense is not always a criterion; something must be paid for fashion and novelty, and perhaps for the cost of the dye. The newest and most expensive colors are not always those which last the longest.

It is not economical to have the dresses made in the extremity of the fashion, because such soon become remarkable; but the fashions should be followed at such a distance, that the wearer may not attract the epithet of old-fashioned.

We conclude this part of our subject with a few suggestions relative to the selection of different styles and materials of dress.

The style of dress should be adapted to the age of the wearer. As a general rule, we should say that in youth the dress should be simple and elegant, the ornaments being flowers. In middle age, the dress may be of rich materials, and more splendid in its character; jewels are the appropriate ornaments. In the decline of life, the materials of which the dress is composed may be equally rich, but with less vivacious colors: the tertiaries and broken colors are particularly suitable, and the character of the whole costume should be quiet, simple, and dignified. The French, whose taste in dress is so far in advance of our own, say, that ladies who are *cinquante ans sonnés*, should neither wear gay colors, nor dresses of slight materials, flowers, feathers, or much jewelry; that they should cover their hair, wear high dresses and long sleeves.

Tall ladies may wear flounces and tucks, but they are less appropriate for short persons. As a gen-

eral rule, vertical stripes make persons appear taller than they really are, but horizontal stripes have a contrary effect. The latter, Mr. Redgrave says, are not admissible in garment fabrics, "since, crossing the person, the pattern quarrels with all the motions of the human figure, as well as with the form of the long folds in the skirts of the garment. For this reason," he continues, "large and pronounced checks, however fashionable, are often in bad taste, and interfere with the graceful arrangement of the drapery." Is it to show their entire contempt for the principles of design that our manufacturers introduced last year not only horizontal stripes of conspicuous colors, but checks and plaids of immense size, as autumnal fashions for dress fabrics? We had hoped that the ladies would have shown the correctness of their taste by their disapproval of these unbecoming designs, but the prevalence of the fashion at the present time is another evidence of the triumph of fashion over good taste.

A white and light-colored dress makes the wearers

appear larger, while a black or dark dress causes them to appear smaller than they actually are. A judicious person will, therefore, avail herself of these known effects, by adopting the style of dress most suitable to her stature.

To sum up, in a few words, our impressions on this subject, we should say that the best style of dress is that which, being exactly adapted to the climate and the individual, is at once modest, quiet, and retiring, harmonious in color and decoration, and of good materials.

We conclude with the following admirable extract from Tobin's "Honeymoon," which we earnestly recommend to the attention of our fair readers.

I'll have no glittering gewgaws stuck about you
To stretch the gaping eyes of idiot wonder,
And make men stare upon a piece of earth,
As on the star-wrought firmament — no feathers,
To wave as streamers to your vanity ;
Nor cumbrous silk, that with its rustling sound
Makes proud the flesh that bears it. She's adorned
Amplly, that in her husband's eye looks lovely —
The truest mirror that an honest wife
Can see her beauty in !

Julia. I shall observe, sir.

Duke. I should like well to see you in the dress I last presented you.

Julia. The blue one, sir?

Duke. No, love,— the white. Thus modestly attired,
A half-blown rose stuck in thy braided hair,
With no more diamonds than those eyes are made of,
No deeper rubies than compose thy lips,
Nor pearls more precious than inhabit them,
With the pure red and white, which that same hand
Which blends the rainbow, mingles in thy cheeks ;
This well-proportioned form (think not I flatter)
In graceful motion to harmonious sounds,
And thy free tresses dancing in the wind,
Thou'lt fix as much observance, as chaste dames
Can meet without a blush.

We look forward hopefully to a day when art-education will be extended to all ranks ; when a knowledge of the beautiful will be added to that of the useful ; when good taste, based upon real knowledge and common sense, will dictate our fashions in dress as in other things. We have schools of art to reform our taste in pottery, hardware, and textile fabrics, not to speak of the higher walks of art, painting, sculpture, and architecture. The handle of a jug, the stem of a wine glass, the

design for dress silks or lace veils, will form the subjects of lectures to the students of the various schools of design; disquisitions are written on the important question whether the ornamental designs should represent the real form of objects, or only give a conventional representation of them; while the study of the human figure, the masterpiece of creation, is totally neglected, except by painters and sculptors. We hope that the study of form will be more extended, that it will be universal, that it will, in fact, enter into the general scheme of education, and that we shall hereafter see as much pains bestowed in improving by appropriate costume the figure which nature has given us, as we do now in distorting it by tight stays, narrow and high-heeled shoes, and all the other deformities and eccentricities of that many-faced monster, fashion. The economy of the frame, and the means of preserving it in health and beauty, should form an integral part of education. There can be no true beauty without health; and how can we hope to secure health if we are ignorant of the means of

promoting it, or if we violate its precepts by adopting absurd and pernicious fashions? Surely it is not too much to hope that dressmakers will hereafter attend the schools of design, to study the human form, and thence learn to appreciate its beauties, and to clothe it with appropriate dress, calculated to display its beauties to the greatest advantage, and to conceal its defects — the latter with the reservation we have already noticed. We hope, also, that the shoemaker will learn to model the shoe upon the true form of the foot.

Manufacturers are now convinced of the importance and utility of schools of design; and whether the article hereafter to be produced be a cup and saucer, a fender, a pattern for a dress, or for furniture, for a service of plate or a diamond tiara, it is thought proper that the pupil, as a preliminary course that cannot be dispensed with, should commence with the study of the human figure. Yet is not dress an art-manufacture as well as a cup and saucer, or a teaboard? Is there less skill and talent, less taste required to clothe the form which

we are told is made after God's own image, than to furnish an apartment? Why should not dressmakers and tailors attend the schools of design, as well as those artisans who are intended to be employed in what are called art-manufactures? Why should not shoemakers be taught the shape and movements of the foot? If this were the case, we are satisfied that an immediate and permanent improvement would be the consequence in our style of dress. Would any person acquainted with the human form, and especially with the little round form of an infant, have sent to the Great Exhibition an infant's robe shaped like that in our cut. Fig. 89. An infant with a waist "growing fine by degrees and beautifully less"! — was there ever such a deformity? We believe that many portrait painters stipulate that they should be allowed to dictate the dress, at least as regards the arrangement of the colors, of their sitters; the reason of this is, that the painter's selection of dress and color is based upon the study of the figure and complexion of the individual, or the knowledge of the effects of con-

trast and harmony of lines, tissues, and colors, while the models which are presented for his imitation too frequently offer to his view a style of dress, both as regards form and color, which set the rules of harmony at defiance. Now, only suppose that the dressmaker had the painter's knowledge of form and harmony of lines and colors, what a revolution would take place in dress? We should no longer see the tall and the short, the slender and the stout, the brown and the fair, the old and the young, dressed alike, but the dress would be adapted to the individual; and we believe that, were the plan of study we recommend generally adopted, this purpose might always be effected without the sacrifice of what is now the grand desideratum in dress—novelty.

The reasons why the art of dressmaking has not hitherto received the attention which it deserves, are to be sought for in the constitution of society. The branches of manufacture which require a knowledge of design, such as calico printing, silk and ribbon weaving, porcelain and pottery, and

hardware manufactures, are conducted on a large scale by men of wealth and talent, who, if they would compete successfully with rival manufacturers, find it necessary to study and apply to their own business all the improvements in science, with which their intercourse with society gives them an opportunity of becoming acquainted. It is quite otherwise with dressmaking. A woman is at the head of every establishment of this kind, a woman generally of limited education and attainments, from whom cannot be expected either liberality of sentiment or enlarged views, but who possibly possesses some tact and discrimination of character, which enables her to exercise a kind of dictatorial power in matters of dress over her customers; these customers are scarcely better informed on the subject than herself.

The early life of the dressmaker is spent in a daily routine of labor with the needle, and when she becomes a mistress in her turn, she exacts from her assistants the same amount of daily labor that was formerly expected from herself. Work, work,

work with the needle from almost childhood, in the same close room from morning to night, and not unfrequently from night to morning also, is the everlasting routine of the monotonous life of the dressmakers. They are working for bread, and have no leisure to attend to the improvement of the mind, and the want of this mental cultivation is apparent in the articles they produce by their labor. When one of the young women who attends these establishments to learn the trade, thinks she has had sufficient experience, she leaves the large establishment, and sets up in business on her own account. In this new situation she works equally hard, and has, therefore, no time for improving her mind or taste. Of the want of this, however, she is not sensible, because she can purchase for a trifle all the newest patterns, and the thought never enters her poor little head, that the same fashion may not suit all her customers. This defective education of the dressmakers, or rather their want of knowledge of the human form, is one of the great causes of the prevalence of the old fashion of tight

lacing; it is so much easier to make a closely-fitting body suit over a tight stay than it is on the pliant and yielding natural form, in which, if one part be drawn a little too tight, or the contrary, the body of the dress is thrown out of shape. Supposing, on the other hand, the fit to be exact, it is so difficult to keep such a tight-fitting body in its place on the figure without securing its form by whalebones, that it is in vain to expect the stays to become obsolete until the tight-fitting bodice is also given up.

This will never take place until not only the ladies who are to be clothed, but the dressmakers, shall make the human form their study, and direct their efforts to set off their natural advantages by attending to the points which are their characteristic beauties. A long and delicate throat, falling shoulders, not too wide from point to point, a flat back, round chest, wide hips—these are the points which should be developed by the dress. Whence it follows, that every article of dress which shortens the throat, adds height or width to the shoulders,

roundness to the back, or flatness to the chest, must be radically wrong in principle, and unpleasant and repulsive in effect. In the same manner, whatever kind of dress adds to the height of a figure already too tall and thin, or detracts from the apparent height of the short and stout, must be avoided. These things should form the study of the dressmaker.

As society is now constituted, however, the dressmaker has not, as we have already observed, leisure to devote to studies of the necessity and importance of which she is still ignorant. The reform must be begun by the ladies themselves. They must acquire a knowledge of form, and of the principles of beauty and harmony, and so exercise a controlling influence over the dressmakers. By this means, a better taste will be created, and the dressmakers will at length discover their deficiency in certain guiding principles, and will be driven at last to resort to similar studies. But in this case a startling difficulty presents itself — the poor dressmaker is at present over-worked: how can she find

leisure to attend the schools of design, or even pursue, if she had the ability, the necessary studies at home? A girl is apprenticed to the trade at the age of thirteen or fourteen; she works at it all her life, rising early, and late taking rest; and what is the remuneration of her daily toil of twelve hours? Eighteen pence, or at most two shillings a day, with her board! * As she reckons the value of the latter at a shilling, it follows, that the earnings of a dressmaker, in the best period of her life, who goes out to work, could not exceed fifteen shillings, or, at the most, eighteen shillings a week, if she did not—at the hazard of her health, which, indeed, is frequently sacrificed—work at home before she begins, and after she has finished, her day's work abroad. The carpenter or house painter does not work harder, or bring to bear on his employment greater knowledge, than the poor dressmaker; yet he has four shillings sixpence a day,

* Of course it will be understood that these are the English prices; but does not the comparison hold good between male and female labor in this country?

without his board, while she has only what is equivalent to two shillings sixpence, or three shillings. What reason can be assigned why a woman's work, if equally well done, should not be as well paid as that of a man? A satisfactory reason has yet to be given; the fact, however, is indisputable, that women are not in general so well paid for their labor as men.

Although these remarks arose naturally out of our subject, we must not digress too far. To return to the dressmaker. If the hours of labor of these white slaves who toil in the dressmaking establishments were limited to ten or twelve hours, as in large factories, two consequences would follow: the first is, that more hands would be employed, and the second, that the young women would have time to attend schools, and improve their minds. If they could also attend occasional lectures on the figure, and on the harmony of color and costume with reference to dress, the best effects would follow.

Those dressmakers who are rich enough, and, we may add, many ladies also, take in some book of

fashions with colored illustrations, and from this they imbibe their notions of beauty of form and elegance of costume. How is it possible, we would ask, for either the dressmaker or the ladies who employ them to acquire just ideas of form, or of suitable costume, when their eyes are accustomed only to behold such deformed and unnatural representations of the human figure as those in the accompanying plates? Figs. 90 and 91. Is it any wonder that small waists should be admired, when the books which aspire to be the handmaids and mirrors of fashion present to their readers such libels on beauty of form? Now, suppose that lithographed drawings of costumes issued occasionally from the schools of design, is it not reasonable to suppose that, with the knowledge which the students have acquired of the human figure, the illustrations would be more accurate imitations of nature? An eye accustomed to the study of nature can scarcely bear to contemplate, much less to imitate, the monsters of a depraved taste which disgrace the different publications that aspire to make

known the newest fashions. Many of the illustrations of these publications, although ill proportioned, are executed in a certain stylish manner which takes with the uneducated, and the mechanical execution of the figures is also good. This, however, is so far from being an advantage, that it only renders them the more dangerous; like the song of the siren, they lead only to evil.

We are told that many of the first Parisian artists derive a considerable part of their income from drawing the figures in the French books of fashion and costume, and that, in the early part of his career, Horace Vernet, the president of the French Academy, did not disdain to employ his talents in this way. We cannot, however, refrain from expressing our surprise and honest indignation that artists of eminence, especially those who, like the French school, have a reputation for correct drawing, and who must, therefore, be so well acquainted with the actual as well as ideal proportions of the female figure, should so prostitute their talents as to employ them in delineating the ill-

proportioned figures which appear in books of fashions. It is no small aggravation of their offence, in our eyes, that the figures should be drawn in such graceful positions, and with the exception of the defective proportions, with so much skill. These beauties only make them more dangerous; the goodness of their execution misleads the unfortunate victims of their fascination. What young lady, unacquainted with the proportions of the figure, could look on these prints of costumes and go away without the belief that a small waist and foot were essential elements of beauty? So she goes home from her dressmaker's, looks in the glass, and not finding her own waist and foot as small as those in the books of fashion, gives her stay-lace an extra tightening pull, and, regardless of corns, squeezes her feet into tight shoes, which makes the instep appear swollen. Both the figures in our last plates were originally drawn and engraved by Jules David, and Reville, in "*Le Moniteur de la Mode*," which is published at Paris, London, New York, and St. Petersburg. Let our readers look at

these figures, and say whether the most determined votary of tight lacing ever succeeded in compressing her waist into the proportions represented in these figures.

We should like to hear that lectures were given occasionally, by a lady in the female school of design, on the subjects of form, and of dress in its adaptation to form and to harmony of color. We have no doubt that a lady competent to deliver these lectures will readily be found. After a course of these lectures, we do not hesitate to predict that illustrations of fashion emanating from this source would be, in point of taste, every thing that could be desired. We venture to think that the students of the female school may be as well and as profitably employed in designing costumes, as in inventing patterns for cups and saucers or borders for veils. Until some course, of the nature we have indicated, is adopted, we cannot hope for any permanent improvement in our costume.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME THOUGHTS ON CHILDREN'S DRESS.

BY MRS. MERRIFIELD.



AN any good and sufficient reason be given, said a friend, as we were contemplating the happy faces and lively gestures of a party of boys and girls, who, one cold, frosty evening, were playing at the old game called "I sent a letter to my love," why, when one of the party picks up the ball which another has thrown down, the boys always stoop, while the girls (with the exception of one little rosy girl, who is active and supple as the boys) invariably drop on one knee? At first we almost fancied this must be a new way of playing the game; but when one of the seniors threw a handful of *bonbons* among the children, and in their eager scramble to pick up the tempting sweets we

observed the same respective actions, namely, that the boys stooped, while the girls knelt on one knee, we began to meditate on the cause of this diversity of action. A little more observation convinced us that the girls, though equally lively, were less free in their movement than the boys. We observed, also, that every now and then some of the girls stopped and hitched their clothes, (which appeared almost in danger of falling off,) with an awkward movement, first upon one shoulder, and then on the other, while others jerked one shoulder upwards, which caused the sleeve on that side to sink nearly to the elbow. "Now," we exclaimed, "we can solve the problem: the different actions are caused by the difference in the dress; let us see where the difference lies." So we continued our observations, and soon found that the boys were all dressed in high dresses up to the throat, while the bands which encircled their waists were so loose as merely to keep the dress in its place without confining it; in short, that their dress did not offer the slightest restraint on their freedom of movement. It was

otherwise with the girls, excepting the little rosy girl before mentioned: they were dressed in low dresses, and their shoulders were so bare that we involuntarily thought of a caterpillar casting its skin, and began to fear, from the uneasy movement of their shoulders, that the same thing might happen to the children, when we observed that this was rendered impossible by the tightness of the clothes about the waist. The mystery was now cleared up; the tightness of the dress at the waist, while it prevented the children from "slipping shell," as it were, entirely destroyed their freedom of movement. We could not help contrasting these poor girls—dressed in the very pink of fashion, with their bare shoulders, compressed waists, and delicate appearance—with the rosy face, quick and active movement, and thick waist of the little girl before alluded to; and we sighed as we thought that, induced by the culpable folly or ignorance of parents,

"Pale decay
Would steal before the steps of time,
And snatch 'their' bloom away."

“Whence does it arise,” continued my friend, “that the boys are clad in warm dresses, suited to the season, their chests and arms protected from the wintry air, and their feet incased in woollen stockings, while the girls are suffered to shiver at Christmas in muslin dresses, with bare necks and arms, and silk or thin cotton stockings? Are they less susceptible of cold than boys? Is their circulation less languid, that their clothes are so much thinner? Are their figures better, their health stronger, for the compression of their tender bodies by stays?” At this point our cogitations were stopped by a summons to supper; and after supper, hats and shawls were produced, and we took our leave. Our young companions, fatigued with their exertions, soon fell asleep in the corners of the carriage, and we were left to our own meditations. Our thoughts once more reverted to the subject of children's dress, and gradually assumed the following form:—

The subject of dress, which is so important both to our health and comfort, is usually treated as a

matter of fashion, and is regulated partly by individual fancy, partly by the dictates of the *modiste*. Fashion, as it applies to the costume of men, is, with the exception of the hat, controlled by convenience and common sense; but with regard to the dress of women and children, neither of these considerations has any weight. The most extravagant and *bizarre* arrangements of form and colors will meet with admirers and imitators, provided they emanate from a fashionable source. The dress of children, especially, appears to be exceedingly fantastic in its character, and, with regard to that of girls, is ill adapted to secure the enjoyment of health and the perfect development of the figure. We venture to offer a few remarks on this highly interesting theme.

In discussing the subject of children's dress, several points present themselves for our consideration, namely, first, the adaptation of the costume to the climate, the movements, and healthful development of the figure; and secondly, the general elegance of the habiliments, the harmony of the

colors, and their special adaptation to the age and individual characteristics of children. The first are essential conditions; the latter, though too frequently treated as the most important, may, in comparison with the first, be deemed non-essentials. We shall remark on these subjects in the before-mentioned order.

With regard to the adaptation of the dress of children to the climate, this appears so evident that any observations upon it might be deemed almost unnecessary; yet, in practice, how little is it understood! The great object in view in regulating the warmth of the clothing, is to guard the wearer from the vicissitudes of the climate, and to equalize the circulation, which is accelerated by heat and retarded by cold. Children are habitually full of activity, which quickens the circulation and produces a determination to the skin; in other words, causes some degree of perspiration, and if this perspiration be suddenly checked by the application of cold, illness in some shape or other is induced. In order to lessen this risk, the clothing should be

light and warm ; sufficiently warm to shield the child from the effects of cold, but not to elevate greatly the temperature of the body. The latter would only render the child more susceptible of cold. Children are, by some over-careful but not judicious parents, so burdened with clothes that one is surprised to find they can move under the vast encumbrance.

There is much diversity of opinion among medical men as to the propriety of wearing flannel next to the skin. The arguments appear to be in favor of the practice, provided that the thickness of the flannel be proportioned to the seasons of the year. In winter it should be thick ; in summer it can scarcely be too thin. Flannel is preferable to linen or calico, because, although it may be saturated with perspiration, it never strikes cold to the skin ; whereas linen, under similar circumstances, always does, and the sudden application of cold to the skin, when warmed by exercise, checks the circulation, and causes illness.

Parents are frequently guilty of much inconsist-

ency in the clothing of their children. The child, perhaps, has delicate lungs ; it must, therefore, have warm clothing ; so garment after garment, made fashionably, that is to say, very full and very short, is heaped one upon the other over the chest and upper part of the body, until the poor child can scarcely move under the heavy burden with which, with mistaken kindness, it has been laden, while the lower limbs, in which the circulation is most languid, and which require to be protected as well as the chest, are frequently exposed to the air, and the foot is covered with a shoe which is too thin to keep it dry. The consequence of this arrangement is, that the child, oppressed by the weight of its clothing, becomes overheated, and being cooled too hastily, catches severe colds.

The habiliments of children cannot be too light in weight ; and this is perfectly consistent with a proper degree of warmth. Those parents are greatly to blame who, influenced only by appearance, and the wish to dress their children fashionably, add to

the weight of their clothing by introducing so much unnecessary fulness into the skirts.

The next point for consideration, and which is not inferior in importance to the last, is the adaptation of the dress to the movements and healthful development of the figure; and, strange to say, this point is almost entirely overlooked by those who have the management and control of children, although a few honest and sensible medical men have raised their warning voices against the system now pursued.

We hear every where of the march of intellect; we are perpetually told that the schoolmaster is abroad; lessons and masters of all kinds are endeavoring

“To teach the young idea how to shoot;”

while the little delicate frame which is to bear all this mental labor is left to the ignorance of mothers and nurses, and the tender mercies of the dress-maker, who seems to think that the human frame is as easily moulded into an imitation of those

libels on humanity represented in books of fashionable costume as the materials with which she works. Would that we had powers of persuasion to convince our readers how greatly these figures, with their excessively-small waists, hands and feet, deviate from the actual proportions of well-formed women! Unfortunately, the pinched waist is too common in real life for those unacquainted with the proportions of the figure not to think it one of the essential elements of beauty. So far, however, from being a beauty, a small waist is an actual blemish. Never, until the economy of the human frame is studied by all classes, and a knowledge of the principles on which its beauties depend is disseminated among all ranks, can we hope that just ideas will be entertained on this subject.

If there is one thing in which the schoolmaster or the reformer is more wanted than in another, it is in our dress. From our birth to our death we are the slaves of fashion, of prejudice, and of circumstances. The tender, unresisting infant, the delicate girl, the mature woman, alike suffer from

these evil influences; some fall victims to them, others suffer during life. Let us consider the dress of an infant. Here, however, it must be acknowledged that of late years much improvement has taken place in some respects, although much still remains to be done. Caps, with their trimming of three or four rows of lace, and large cockades which rivalled in size the dear little round face of the child, are discontinued almost entirely within doors, though the poor child is still almost overwhelmed with cap, hat, and feathers, in its daily airings, the additional weight which its poor neck has to sustain never once entering into the calculation of its mother and nurse. Fine feathers, it is said, make fine birds. This may be true with respect to the feathered creation, but it is not so with regard to children. They suffer from the misplaced finery, and from the undue heat of the head. And yet the head has, generally speaking, been better treated by us than the rest of the body. When we look back upon the history of costume, it really seems as if men—or women, shall we

say? — had exercised their ingenuity in torturing the human frame, and destroying its health and vigor.

The American Indian compresses the tender skull of the infant, and binds its little body on to a flat board; the Chinese squeezes the feet of the females; the Italian peasants, following the custom of the Orientals, still roll the infant in swathing bands; the little legs of the child, that when left to its own disposal are in perpetual motion, now curled up to the body, then thrust out their extreme length, to the evident enjoyment of their owner, are extended in a straight line, laid side by side, and bandaged together, so that the infant reminds one in shape of a mummy. In this highly cultivated country we are guilty towards our infants of practices quite as senseless, as cruel, and as contrary to nature. The movements of the lower limbs, so essential to the healthy growth of the child, are limited and restrained, if not altogether prevented, by the great weight that we hang upon them. The long petticoats, in which every infant in this country has

been for centuries doomed to pass many months of its existence, are as absurd as they are prejudicial to the child. The evil has of late years rather increased than diminished, for the clothes are not only made much longer, but much fuller, so that the poor victim has an additional weight to bear. Many instances can be mentioned in which the long clothes have been made a yard and a quarter long. The absurdity of this custom becomes apparent, if we only imagine a mother or nurse of short stature carrying an infant in petticoats of this length; and we believe that long clothes are always made totally irrespective of the height of mother or nurse. Imagine one or the other treading on the robe, and throwing herself and the child down! Imagine, also, the probable consequences of such an accident! And when one ventures to express doubts as to the propriety of dressing an infant in long clothes, instead of arguments in their favor, one is met by the absurd remark, "A baby looks so grand in long clothes!" We have for some years endeavored, as far as our influence extended,

to put an end to this practice, and in some cases we have so far succeeded as to induce the mother to short-coat the child before it was three months old, and even previous to this period to make the under garments of a length suited to the size of the child, while the frock or robe, as it is called, retained the fashionable length. The latter, being of fine texture, did not add considerably to the weight of the clothes. Children who have the free use of their limbs not only walk earlier than others, but are stronger on their feet.

Another evil practice, which some years since prevailed universally, was that of rolling a bandage, three inches in width, and two or three yards in length, round the body of the child. The pain that such a bandage, from its unyielding nature, would occasion, not to speak of its ill effects on the health, may be readily imagined. This bandage was, in fact, a kind of breaking in for the tight lacing, the penalty which most females in this country have had, at some period or other, to undergo.

There is no end of the inconsistencies of chil-

dren's dress. If, in early infancy, they are buried in long petticoats, no sooner can they walk than the petticoats are so shortened that they scarcely cover the child's back when it stoops. The human race has a wonderful power of accommodating itself to a variety of temperatures and climates; but perhaps it is seldom exposed to greater vicissitudes than in the change from long clothes to the extremely short and full ones that are now fashionable. The very full skirt is not so warm in proportion to its length as one of more moderate fulness; because, instead of clinging round the figure, it stands off from it, and admits the air under it. The former is also heavier than the latter, inasmuch as it contains more material; and the weight of the clothing is a great disadvantage to a child. A sensible medical writer, Dr. John F. South, in an excellent little work entitled "Domestic Surgery," makes some very judicious observations relative to children's dress. Of the fashion of dressing boys with the tunic reaching to the throat, and trousers, which are both so loose as

to offer no impediment to freedom of motion, he approves ; but he condemns, in the strongest terms, "the unnatural" — Mr. South remarks he had almost said "atrocious — system to which, in youth, if not in childhood, girls are subjected for the improvement of their figure and gait."

It is fortunate for the present generation that it is the fashion for the dresses of even little girls to be made as high as the throat ; the old fashion of cutting the frock low round the neck, which still exists in what is called "full dress," is objectionable on more than one account. In the first place, it is objected to on the consideration of health ; because the upper part of the chest is not protected from the influence of currents of air, and by this means, as Mr. South observes, the foundation is laid for irritable lungs. In the next place, the dress is generally suffered to fall off the shoulders, and is, in fact, only retained in its place by the tight band about the waist. To avoid the uneasiness occasioned by the pressure of the latter, the child slips its clothes off one shoulder, generally the right,

which it raises more than the other; the consequence of this is, that the raised shoulder becomes permanently higher than the other, and the spine is drawn towards the same side. It is said that there is scarcely one English woman in fifty who has not one shoulder higher or thicker than the other; and there appears but little doubt that much of this deformity is to be ascribed to the above-mentioned cause. In confirmation of this opinion, it may be mentioned that the practice of wearing dresses low in the neck is almost peculiar to English girls; French girls, nearly from infancy, wear high dresses, and it is certain that deformity is not so frequent among French women as it is among English.

The discipline of tight lacing is frequently begun so early in life, that the poor victim has little or no recollection of the pain and suffering occasioned by the pressure of the stiff and uncomfortable stays before the frame has become accustomed to them. Those of our readers who were fortunate enough to

escape this infliction in early life, and who adopted stiff stays at a more mature age, can bear testimony to the suffering occasioned by them during the first few weeks of their use. "O," said a girl who put on stiff stays, for the first time, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, "I wish bedtime was come, that I might take off these stiff and uncomfortable stays, they pain me so much." "Hush, hush!" exclaimed a starch old maiden aunt, shocked at what she thought the indelicacy of the expression which pain had wrung from the poor girl; "you must bear it for a time; you will soon get used to it." Used to it! Yes, indeed, as the cook said the eels did to skinning, and with, as regards the poor girls, almost as disastrous consequences.

There are three points of view in which tight lacing is prejudicial. It weakens the muscles of the shoulders and chest, which rust, as it were, for want of use; it injures, by pressure, the important organs contained in the chest and trunk; and, lastly, instead of improving the figure, it positively

and absolutely deforms it. A waist disproportionately small, compared with the stature and proportions of the individual, is a greater deformity than one which is too large; the latter is simply clumsy; it does not injure the health of the person, while the former is not only prejudicial to health, but to beauty. Were our fair readers but once convinced of this fact, there would be an end of tight lacing; and the good results arising from the abolition of this practice would be evident in the improved health of the next generation.

What a host of evils follow in the steps of tight lacing! Indigestion, hysteria, spinal distortion, consumption, liver complaints, disease of the heart, cancer, early death!—these are a few of them, and enough to make both mothers and daughters tremble. It is an aggravation of the evil that is brought upon us frequently by the agency of a mother—of her upon whose affection and experience a child naturally relies in all things, and whose lamentable ignorance of what constitutes beauty

of form, as well as her subjection to the thralldom of fashion, is the prolific source of so much future misery to her unsuspecting daughter.

Education is the order of the day; but surely that education must be very superficial and incomplete, of which the study of the economy of the human form, its various beauties, and the wonderful skill with which it was created, form no part. A girl spends several years in learning French, Italian, and German, which may be useful to her should she meet with French, Italians, or Germans, or should she visit the continent; she spends three, four, five, and sometimes six hours a day, in practising on the piano, frequently without having any real talent for this accomplishment, while she is kept in utter ignorance of that which is of vital consequence not only to herself, but to her future offspring, namely, a knowledge of what constitutes true beauty, and contributes to the preservation of health, and, we may also add, of good humor and happiness; for it is one of the evils attending ill

health, that it frequently induces a fretful and irritable state of mind. Instead of the really useful knowledge of the economy of the frame, and the means of preserving health, girls are taught the constrained attitudes and the artificial deportment of the dancing master. The remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds on this subject has been often quoted. He said, "All the motions of children are full of grace; affectation and distortion come in with the dancing master." To dancing itself there is not the slightest objection; it is at once an agreeable and healthy occupation, and it affords a pleasing and innocent recreation. The pleasure which most children take in it, in spite of the "exercises" which they are compelled to practise, proves, we think, its utility.

The treatment of the feet is on a par with that of the rest of the body. The toes are thrust close together into a shoe, the shape of the sole of which does not resemble that of the foot. It is generally narrower than the foot, which, therefore, hangs over

the sides. The soles of children's shoes are, moreover, made alike on both sides, whereas the inside should be nearly straight, and the width of the sole should correspond exactly with that of the foot. Boots, which have been so fashionable of late years, are very convenient, and have a neat appearance, but they are considered to weaken the ankle, because the artificial support which they give to that part prevents the full exercise of the muscles, which waste from want of use. Shoes should be cut short in the quarter, because the pressure necessary to keep such shoes as are now worn on the feet will, in this case, be on the instep instead of the toes, which will, by this arrangement, have more room.

We shall conclude our observations on children's dress, considered in a sanitary point of view, in the words of Mr. South. "If, then, you wish your children, girls especially, to have the best chance of health, and a good constitution, let them wear flannel next their skin, and woollen stockings in winter; have your girls' chests covered to the collar

bones, and their shoulders *in*, not *out* of their dresses, if you would have them straight; and do not confine their chests and compress their digestive organs by bone stays, or interfere with the free movement of their chests by tight belts, or any other contrivance, if you desire their lungs should do their duty, upon which so mainly depends the preservation of health." — *Sharpe's London Magazine*.

NOTE. — The Fig. 58, referred to on the top of page 59, is not found in the plate; but the same style of dressing the hair may be seen in Fig. 57.

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